

DIVISION OF BIOKINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL THERAPY



USC

***STUDENT HANDBOOK
DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM***

2026 - 2027



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

DIVISION OF BIOKINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL THERAPY MISSION & VISION

Our Vision

To transform healthcare by creating the future in physical therapy.

Our Mission

To enhance the health and quality of life of all people by advancing physical therapy education, science, and practice.

Our Objectives

1. Transform Education to Meet Societal Needs
2. Develop Leaders for a Rapidly Changing Healthcare System
3. Integrate Research and Practice to Advance Science and Human Health
Influence Local and Global Communities of Practice

DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY MISSION & VISION

Mission

To prepare physical therapists to be responsible health care providers who demonstrate core professional values, address the needs of the individual across the lifespan, and embrace evidence-based and patient-centered practice.

Vision

To have the USC Doctor of Physical Therapy program recognized as the premier program, cultivating the highest caliber physical therapists who improve individual and societal health through innovations in clinical practice, education, leadership and research.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a written copy of the policies and procedures of the USC Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

In addition, students, faculty and staff are held to the standards and practices of the University as it relates to all policies and procedures that relate to faculty, staff, and university affairs and governance. All students, faculty and staff are encouraged to review the University policies and procedures available to them at:

<https://policy.usc.edu/>, including the Student Handbook at
<https://policy.usc.edu/studenthandbook/>

We require that all students verify that they have read the 2026-2027 USC DPT Student Handbook by signing the following signature page and submitting to the link provided.

Review Acknowledgement Signature Page

USC DIVISION OF BIOKINESIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL THERAPY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026 - 2027

ATTENTION – e-SIGN AND UPLOAD TO STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE

[UPLOAD LINK](#)

The undersigned indicates by their signature that they have viewed a copy of the electronic version of the USC Student Handbook 2026-2027, and therefore, is informed of the Division's policies related to academic, clinical, and professional expectations. Your signature confirms your understanding of these expectations and your willingness to be responsible for your conduct associated with these expectations. A copy of this signed agreement will be placed in your student records file.

PRINT NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Check appropriate class:

- ☐ _____ DPT Class of 2027
- ☐ _____ DPT Class of 2028
- ☐ _____ DPT Class of 2029

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIVISION OF BIOKINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL THERAPY MISSION & VISION	3
DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY MISSION & VISION	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	6
SECTION 1 GENERAL POLICIES.....	8
I. Explanation of Terms	8
II. Commitment to a Culture of Inclusion	9
III. CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION	10
IV. HEALTH DISCLOSURES, STUDENT INJURY, & PARTICIPATION IN DIDACTIC, LABORATORY OR CLINICAL ASSIGNMENTS	12
V. MEETINGS OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY	13
1. 14	
VI. COUNTY/STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS AND THE STUDENT	14
VII. DRESS STANDARDS	14
2. 16	
VIII. RECORDING OF LECTURES AND GUEST SPEAKERS.....	16
IX. SOCIAL MEDIA	16
X. FACULTY TITLES AND NAMES	16
XI. REQUIRED INSURANCE, IMMUNIZATIONS, CERTIFICATES, AND MEMBERSHIP	17
XII. LIBRARY RESOURCES	18
XIII. RESEARCH PROJECTS	18
XIV. HEALTH LEAVE OF ABSENCE, PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL, AND ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULE.....	18
XV. READMISSION FOLLOWING VOLUNTARY HEALTH LEAVE OF ABSENCE, PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL.....	21
XVI. UNIVERSITY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND NATIONAL LICENSURE EXAM POLICY	23
XVII. MISCELLANEOUS.....	24
SECTION 2 STUDENT SUPPORT.....	27
I. GENERAL.....	27
II. STUDENT MENTORING: USC DPT Mentor Program	27
III. STUDENT TUTORING.....	28
IV. HEALTH SERVICES.....	29
V. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EQUAL ACCESS	30
SECTION 3 ANATOMY LABORATORY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	31
I. ANATOMY LAB SAFETY POLICY	Error! Bookmark not defined.
II. LABORATORY PROCEDURES	Error! Bookmark not defined.
SECTION 4 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICIES	33
I. PHILOSOPHY and POSITION STATEMENT.....	33
II. OATH OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST.....	33
III. RESOURCES	34
IV. SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS for ACADEMIC INTEGRITY	34
V. SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE USE OF AI.....	36
VI. VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY	39
VII. APPEALS PROCESS.....	42
VIII. PROTECTION OF COPYRIGHT LAWS.....	42
SECTION 5 STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION POLICY	44
I. GENERAL POLICIES.....	44
II. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	44
III. CLINICAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	49
IV. PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	50
SECTION 6 CONSEQUENCES OF UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE	54
I. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.....	54

II.	CLINICAL PERFORMANCE.....	57
III.	PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE.....	59
IV.	CONSEQUENCES OF UNRESOLVED WARNING OR PROBATION	63
V.	APPEALS PROCESS.....	64
VI.	READMISSION FOLLOWING DISMISSAL.....	65
APPENDIX.....		67
A.	PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITIONS SUMMARY FORM.....	68
B.	STUDENT INJURY REPORT.....	71

SECTION 1 GENERAL POLICIES

I. Explanation of Terms

Academic term

The period of time allotted for course presentation and student evaluation (semester or summer session). The last day of final examinations is considered the end of an academic term.

Assessment of Academic Performance

Academic program courses use the numerical grade system with letter grades submitted for course credit. It is the responsibility of the Course Director to assign a grade based upon the conditions delineated in the course syllabus. Course Directors use the numerical grade system below to determine the final letter grade for their course.

Course Director

Faculty member with primary responsibility for a given course.

Director of Clinical Education (DCE)

A faculty member who is responsible for the Clinical Education program.

Director of Faculty Services and Development

A faculty member who is responsible for supporting faculty in their roles as educators in the DPT Program.

Director of Student Services

A staff person responsible for management of all student support services

Division Chair

The faculty person who serves as Chair of the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy.

DPT Program Director

A faculty member who is responsible for all operations of the DPT program.

DPT Program Directors' Council

Consists of faculty and staff designated as Director of DPT Program functions including: Director of Admissions, Director of Clinical Education, Director of Faculty Resources and Development, and Director of Student Services.

Faculty Mentor

A faculty member who is responsible for supporting students as they progress through the DPT program. Students are assigned a faculty member to be their Faculty Mentor.

Grade Point System

Grade points are used to compute grade point averages (GPA's). Grade points for a course are derived by multiplying the numerical equivalent of final course grade by the quantity of academic units for that course. Cumulative grade point average (CUM GPA) is the average of all grades from all courses taken at the University of Southern California, Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy.

Hybrid Lead

Individual faculty member responsible for conducting the hybrid pathway of a course under direction of the Course Director.

Residential Lead

Individual faculty member responsible for conducting the residential pathway of a course under direction of the Course Director.

Student

A student is a person pursuing a degree offered by the Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy, and who is registered with the University.

Student in the Hybrid Pathway

Student enrolled in the hybrid online/on-campus pathway of the DPT program.

Student in the Residential Pathway

Student enrolled in the year-round on-campus pathway of the DPT program.

Student Performance Committee (SPC)

An ad hoc committee comprised of 3 or more faculty members, one of which may be from outside the division, who can be designated by the Division Chair to review appeals related to a students' status in the program.

II. Commitment to a Culture of Inclusion

The Division is committed to a culture of inclusion in our teaching policies and practices. Knowing that we are limited by our own cultural lenses, life experiences, and institutional blind spots, there will be instances when we fall short of our goals of creating a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment. When we do fall short, we invite students to bring to our attention instances that undermine your or another's sense of belonging. We encourage students to bring these concerns directly to the offending Division member (faculty, staff, or student). However, we recognize that some students may prefer other methods to communicate these concerns. In those cases, these instances can be reported on the Division Culture Concern Reporting form with the option of remaining anonymous. This form may be found [here](#).

III. CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

The philosophy of the Division is that a professional curriculum requires certain standards that may differ from non-professional graduate school programs. Attendance is one of these differences. Specifically, attendance is required at all class sessions unless it has been explicitly stated otherwise in the course syllabus. Consider that you are now beginning your professional career. As in the workplace, attendance is mandatory, and absence requires an explanation and notification.

A. Preparation Expectations

Students are required to complete assigned preparatory online lessons and assignments by the deadlines identified in individual course syllabi.

B. Attendance Expectations

Students in the residential pathway are required to attend both lecture and laboratory classes and to arrive on time. Students in the hybrid pathway are required to attend all live sessions (virtual classroom experiences) and on-campus immersions and to arrive on time.

C. Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused absences include personal illness that prevents a student from participating in class or a family emergency that must be attended to during class time and cannot be deferred to outside class time without direct harm to the person(s) involved. All absences other than those for illness, family emergency are considered unexcused.

D. Communicating an Absence

All students should contact the Division regarding **any** absence by sending an email notification to residentialabsence@pt.usc.edu or hybridabsence@pt.usc.edu. If the student reports personal illness or verifiable family emergency, the absence will be designated as 'excused'. If an email notification is not sent by the student to the Division or if the reason for the absence is not specified, the absence will be considered an unexcused absence.

Students should note that they are responsible for notifying their Clinical Instructor as well as the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) any day that they will be absent from a facility during a clinical education experience. Absences from clinical experience due to illness or emergency must be reported directly to the Division by sending an email notification to residentialabsence@pt.usc.edu or hybridabsence@pt.usc.edu. Contact to the clinic where the student is assigned is also required. If an absence is unavoidable during a clinical assignment, the clinical facility must be notified first and the Division second. Any non-emergency absences that prevent a student from being in the clinic should be requested

through the DCE via email PRIOR to the absence and before discussion with the clinical instructor.

E. Making up Missed Class, Exams, and Clinical Placements

Students are responsible for all class material. In the event of an absence from class, it is the student's responsibility to contact the appropriate faculty members to arrange a satisfactory plan to make-up class work or tests missed because of an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to make up all class work and demonstrate adequate mastery of concepts or skills covered during the absence.

Students will be provided the opportunity to make-up missed work for excused absences. Make-up work is developed by the faculty and may differ from the work required for those who attended class – including alternate exams and assignments. Students with unexcused absences are not, under most circumstances, provided with the opportunity to make up missed work. This includes unexcused absences from exams.

Make-up examinations for an excused absence are left to the Course Director's discretion. Faculty may choose to alter the format of a make-up exam (i.e., a change from written to oral format), and scheduling of the exam is by agreement between the faculty member and the student. If a final examination is missed and arrangements for make-up examinations cannot be made prior to the deadline for grade submission, the student will receive an incomplete.

NOTE: Examinations will **not** be rescheduled for any personal reasons. This is a University policy with which the Division and its faculty are required to comply.

The make-up of days missed during a clinical placement experience due to illness or emergency is at the discretion of the Division and the clinic with consideration to allowing the student enough time in the clinic to successfully meet performance expectations. Any non-emergent days missed during a clinical placement must be made up.

F. Prolonged Absence

More than two *excused* absences per semester are considered excessive and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. One or more *unexcused* absences in consecutive semesters are considered excessive and evidence of non-professional performance, and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Unexcused absences are not grounds for receiving an incomplete in didactic or clinical courses.

Sustained absences (>2 days) require regular communication with Student Services (when missing didactic and laboratory classes) or the Director of

Clinical Education (when missing clinical education placement time) to ensure coordination and support for the student's return.

Prolonged excused absences due to a health condition or personal/family event beyond the student's control may be grounds to request a [USC Health Leave of Absence](#) (health condition) or Division-granted Student Leave of Absence (personal/family events) The Division must be officially notified with proper documentation to comply with University standards. See section XIV for more details on leave of absence options and procedures.

IV. HEALTH DISCLOSURES, STUDENT INJURY, & PARTICIPATION IN DIDACTIC, LABORATORY OR CLINICAL ASSIGNMENTS

Students serve as patient models for many different activities/techniques in clinical lab courses and immersion experiences. This allows each student the opportunity to practice on live patient models with a variety of body types.

Every student is expected to participate in clinical labs as a patient and physical therapist. The student has the right to refuse to serve as a subject for demonstration without prejudice by the instructor if they have a health history that would be aggravated by such participation. Each student is encouraged to make any physical or emotional limitations known to instructors and student partners but is not required to disclose specific health history information. Failure to refuse participation indicates consent to participate, and acknowledgment of and acceptance of any inherent risks.

If a student sustains an injury or their health changes during the course of the academic term and this health change may prevent them from full participation in coursework of any kind, then the following must occur:

- The student must inform the Course Director as soon as possible via email or in-person conversation that they will be unable to participate in some lab activities.
- The student will be provided with an **Activity Restriction/Release Form (see Appendix)** to be filled out and signed by their physician that will determine the student's level of restriction in class participation. This form will need to be updated and returned to Student Services prior to return to full class participation. This form can be obtained from Student Services in CHP 155.
- The Student must notify the Course Director of the expected time frame for expected return to full class participation (as determined by the healthcare provider).
- If the injury occurs during school related activities, the student must also complete a **Student Injury Report (see Appendix)**. Return this form to Student Services.

Students whose injury or illness requires them to miss a midterm or examination will be required to meet with the Course Director. The student and Course Director or Director of Didactic and Laboratory Education will determine a timely schedule for

re-testing of a missed exam. The student will be responsible for staying up to date with course material through assigned reading, course notes, classmate assistance and office hours.

Unresolved health issues or injury which require greater than three days of restricted attendance and/or participation and/or impact an examination will be considered on a case by case basis by the DPT Program Director in consultation with Course Directors and the Student to determine the best course of action, which may include any of the following: make-up assignments/exams, leave of absence, withdrawal, or dismissal.

Treatment of Injuries: “Casual” or “informal” physical therapy treatment for a disclosed or undisclosed injury will not be given by any of the faculty to students during or outside of class time. Use of a student as the “demo” patient should not be interpreted as physical therapy treatment. If a student wishes to seek Physical Therapy treatment for an injury, the student must schedule an appointment in a structured clinical setting to insure a thorough exam and focused and consistent treatment.

V. MEETINGS OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Class officers and representatives are elected during the first year of the program. The class president and class representatives meet regularly with Student Services to discuss matters of interest or concern to the class as a whole. Students should communicate these types of concerns to their class officers or representatives, who can then assess how widespread the issues are and discuss them with Student Services staff. Student Services staff may facilitate additional conversations with faculty and the DPT Program Director to facilitate resolution.

Meetings of individual students and faculty may be initiated by either the faculty or the student. Appointments are required for most meetings and should be made directly with the faculty member. Students and faculty are expected to honor appointments and to cancel well in advance (except for unforeseen emergencies) if the appointment cannot be kept.

Students experiencing academic difficulty are responsible for seeking advice and assistance from the Course Director (the faculty member with primary responsibility for the course) and their faculty mentor. Students may also seek counsel from the Director of Didactic & Laboratory Education. Course Directors will list their course office hours in the course syllabus or post them online. Appointments are to be scheduled directly with the faculty member.

Students are requested to refrain from contacting faculty members by cell phone or at home unless permission has been granted directly by the faculty member. While the Division encourages student/faculty interaction, it requests that students adhere to this courtesy, except in cases of extreme urgency.

It should be remembered that some faculty are not on-site, work part-time, and/or may be on vacation during parts of the year. Counseling or mentoring of students regarding the program or research projects may revert to faculty-on-duty and may be subject to availability. Urgent matters can be brought to the attention of Student Services.

VI. COUNTY/STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS AND THE STUDENT

A. *Use of Alcoholic Beverages, Drugs and Smoking*

The USC Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy is located on the USC Health Science Campus. The consumption of alcoholic beverages, the use of illegal drugs or the demonstration of drunk or disorderly behavior on the campus is expressly prohibited. Smoking is prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities on university owned and leased property with no exception, including within vehicles parked on those properties.

B. *Conviction of Felonious Crimes*

Conviction of a felony constitutes grounds for denial of eligibility for licensure or revocation of a license in the case of a physical therapist possessing a license to practice physical therapy. Similarly, conviction of a felony constitutes grounds for dismissal from the physical therapy program at USC.

VII. DRESS STANDARDS

Since the Division is located on a campus that includes hospitals and medical offices, it is common to encounter patients and health professionals throughout the day. Personal appearance is the first statement you make to patients, other health professionals, and the public in general about yourself and your profession. Dress is an outward manifestation of professional pride and attitude. Students in this program are evolving health care professionals and, therefore, are seen as representatives of the Division and the physical therapy profession. Because of the importance of appearance in conveying a professional attitude, a dress code will be adhered to by faculty and students. Video live session classes are a virtual extension of our professional environment and should also be respected as such with professional dress.

A. *In a Clinical Facility*

When in any patient care facility or area, be it for a class, clinical education experience, or other use, acceptable attire consists of:

1. Name tags worn at all times
2. White clinic coats

3. Slacks, long pants or skirts/dresses (no jeans/shorts)
4. Shirt and tie, collared shirts or blouses
5. Clean shoes with closed heel and toe; socks or hose must be worn. (Clean, well-kept tennis shoes may be permitted in some clinic settings)
6. Long hair must be tied back to prevent it from touching patients.
7. Fingernails must be short.
8. Jewelry must be kept to a minimum and cannot pose any safety hazard for patient or student during patient care.
9. Visible body piercing (excluding ears) and tattoos may be considered unprofessional and unacceptable in the clinical setting. Each clinical site has the support of the school to request a student remove any piercing or cover the area of the tattoo per their site regulations.
10. Facial hair may need to be trimmed or removed to accommodate effective use of personal protective equipment in some clinical settings.

If the clinical setting has different dress requirements than the Division, the student should follow the clinical setting guidelines (e.g., no white laboratory coats in a pediatric setting, scrubs, athletic attire)

B. *Classroom Attire (live or virtual) When There is a Guest Faculty or Patient present:*

1. Dress standards are the same as in a clinical facility.
2. White clinic coats need not be worn unless requested by the faculty.

C. *In a Clinical Lab the attire is as follows:*

1. Clean and gently worn shorts and T-shirts/tank tops.
 2. Bike Shorts or Supporters for men worn under the shorts
 3. Ability to bare the trunk, e.g. 2-piece swimsuit top or sports bra for women
- *Faculty members will discuss the required attire for specific class meetings as needed.*

D. *Anatomy Lab*

1. Scrub top and bottom
2. Shoes with closed heel and toe
3. Medical gloves
4. Eye protection (glasses, goggles, or face shield)

E. *Unacceptable Attire at Any Time*

1. Clothing with inappropriate language/pictures including, but is not limited to, depictions or messages suggestive of weapons/violence, drugs, alcohol, or sex.
2. Unkempt/torn attire/shoe
3. Clothing items resulting in excessive skin exposure for the clinical, classroom, or laboratory setting

4. No head coverings (except for religious purposes) during exams or professional dress days

The faculty members and clinical instructors reserve the right to prevent any student from attending any class or clinical experience at any location if the student's attire is judged to be non-professional. This is considered an unexcused absence, and therefore the student will be held accountable for material covered in that class.

Repetitive infractions of the dress standards may result in the student being placed on Professional or Clinical Warning. **(See Section 6).**

VIII. RECORDING OF LECTURES AND GUEST SPEAKERS

Students must obtain permission to audio or video record any lectures by faculty or guest speakers, patients, or fellow students. Recordings provided by the Division are for the use of enrolled students only. It is strictly prohibited to share recordings (e.g. Zoom links) with anyone outside the Division. Violation of this policy will warrant consideration of being placed on Clinical Warning or Probation for poor professional behavior **(See Section 6).**

IX. SOCIAL MEDIA

Control your online reputation. Students should be acutely aware of their online reputation and take proactive measures to project a professional image at all times, be it on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok or any other social media outlet. Students should be aware that it is not uncommon for prospective clinical sites, patients and employers to check a prospective student intern/employee's social media presence. Consideration should also be given to the reputation of those you are associated with. For example, if your Facebook account lists you as a USC student, then the online image you project directly influences USC's image. Accordingly, please be careful in what you post. Posted content that is deemed to be unacceptable may warrant consideration of being placed on Professional Warning or Probation for poor professional behavior **(See Section 6).**

During a clinical education experience, it is the student's responsibility to abide by the policies and procedures set forth by the clinic. Students must first obtain the clinic's permission to post on any social media site about the clinic or patients, then check in with the DCE to ensure there are not contractual considerations related to posting on social media. Even if permission is granted, the student must follow HIPAA guidelines and protect the patients' and clinic's privacy at all times. Violation of this policy will warrant consideration of being placed on Professional Warning or Probation for poor professional behavior **(See Section 6).**

X. FACULTY TITLES AND NAMES

In formal settings (e.g. classrooms, labs, clinical sites) all faculty and staff should be addressed according to their formal titles (Dr., Professor, Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. or other title chosen by that person). When faculty and students are in a less formal setting, it is the prerogative of the individual faculty or staff member to request being addressed informally.

XI. REQUIRED INSURANCE, IMMUNIZATIONS, CERTIFICATES, AND MEMBERSHIP

The following must be kept current throughout the students' career at USC. Untimely renewal or lapses of any of these items will prevent the student's participation in required educational experiences.

A. *Malpractice Insurance*

Students are covered by malpractice insurance through the group policy that USC purchases.

B. *Health Care Insurance*

All students are required to have health insurance coverage during both the academic and clinical portions of their curriculum. Compliance with health insurance requirements is monitored by [USC Student Health](#).

C. *CPR*

American Heart Association CPR for the Healthcare Provider (Basic Life Support BLS Provider) certification is required and must be kept current throughout the academic and clinical portions of the curriculum. Proof of current CPR course completion must be uploaded by the student into Prism.

D. *Immunizations and Titers*

Immunizations and health clearances must be kept current the entire time students are in the program. Compliance with health immunization requirements is monitored by [USC Student Health](#). Proof of current compliance status for clinical education purposes should be uploaded into Exxat by the student.

Note: The University of Southern California, Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, requires that students stay up to date with their COVID-19 and annual influenza vaccinations. We define 'up to date' as being in compliance with requirements for health care providers in Los Angeles County. Students may submit a health exemption form(s) to the USC Student Health Center to maintain compliance and be permitted to attend on-campus classes. However, a USC health exemption does not serve as an exemption for required diversity of settings in clinical education experiences. Please note that receiving University declination(s) for these vaccination(s) will limit your clinical education experience

placement opportunities and may delay your graduation while a suitable clinical placement location is identified.

E. *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Certification*

Training will be provided through USC and must be completed during the first semester of the DPT Program, prior to students interacting with patients or clients.

F. *APTA Student Membership*

Students are required to join the APTA in their first year of study. Thereafter, they are strongly encouraged to renew their membership as well as to attend Chapter and District functions, and to participate in the activities provided for student members.

XII. LIBRARY RESOURCES

The primary library for DPT students is Norris Medical Library (<http://nml.usc.edu/>). Most library resources can be obtained electronically. Materials on reserve must not be removed from the Library. Materials for current class use may only be checked out overnight. All borrowed library materials should be returned by the due date. Non-adherence to this practice may result in denial of periodical borrowing privileges at USC Norris Medical Library, Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center Library, or other libraries. If a student in the hybrid pathway requires a physical library resource an option may be available to mail the resource to the student. Please contact Student Services for assistance.

XIII. RESEARCH PROJECTS

Each faculty member has a general area of research. Many areas of research are suitable for development of student research projects and papers. Students may develop and execute a research project or proposal, under the guidance of a faculty member. Any such projects, however, are considered extracurricular to the DPT program requirements for graduation.

There is an added dimension of responsibility placed on the student investigator. Research protocols must adhere to ethical standards required for all research at the University and data provided must be accurate and valid.

XIV. HEALTH LEAVE OF ABSENCE, PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL, AND ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULE

The faculty of the Division recognizes that in some special instances it may be necessary for a student to interrupt or discontinue their Physical Therapy education. The university's goal in these circumstances is to support students so they are able to address their needs and return to complete their program. Counseling in such

situations is available from the Student Services Administrator, the Director of Didactic and Laboratory Education, the student's Faculty Mentor and/or the DPT Program Director. The procedures for doing so and the policy governing such action follow.

A. HEALTH LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. The university provides two types of health leaves, a Voluntary Health Leave of Absence and a Mandated Health Leave of Absence. Both types of health leaves, and the process for returning from leave, are described in full here (<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-of-absence>) and apply to all the university's programs, whether on-campus or online.
2. A Voluntary Health Leave of Absence (VHLA) is a temporary and voluntary leave from the university due to a student's health needs. A VHLA is available when a student's health condition significantly interferes with the student's ability to function successfully within the university's programs. The authority to grant a health leave and permission to return from a health leave resides with the university's Health Leave Team, in consultation with the student's academic unit, treatment providers, and relevant campus partners. The Health Leave Coordinator aims to support the student through the process, providing information about the tasks associated with a health leave and helping the student to develop and implement a plan to facilitate their recovery and return to school. Typically, a VHLA lasts between one full semester and one academic year, but may be extended by providing documentation outlining the need to the Health Leave Coordinator.
3. Requesting a VHLA
 - a. The process and links to request a VHLA are located here (<https://campussupport.usc.edu/students/health-and-wellness/health-leave-of-absence/>).
 - b. Health leaves should be requested prior to the deadline for dropping classes. The last day to request a health leave for any semester is the final day of classes. Health leaves cannot be granted retroactively once a semester has been completed.
 - c. A student may initiate a request for a VHLA by speaking with a Health Leave Coordinator.
 - d. The student must complete the Voluntary Health Leave of Absence Request, which will be reviewed by the Health Leave Coordinator.

B. PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. A personal leave of absence is a temporary leave from the university, which may be necessary during your academic career for personal reasons.
2. A personal leave of absence must be approved by the DPT Program Director.

3. A leave of absence is typically for one academic year and will not exceed one year. A leave of absence after all course work is completed will not be allowed (Graduate School Policy).
4. Readmission following leave of absence: The procedures for establishing programs for readmitted students have been purposefully left flexible in order to better respond to the needs of individual students.
5. Students are encouraged to seek additional counseling regarding a personal leave of absence from their appointed Student Success Advisor (hybrid pathway) and the Student Services Staff (residential and hybrid pathways).

C. WITHDRAWAL

1. A student wishing to withdraw from the DPT program must obtain the withdrawal forms from the Office of the Registrar. The completed forms are to be returned to that office accompanied by a letter of intent. A copy of the letter is to be submitted to the Director of Student Services at the Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy (studentaffairs@pt.usc.edu).
2. A student who withdraws at any time during the first twelve full weeks of an academic term will receive a recorded grade of "W" for enrolled courses. Contact the Division Student Services Office for information regarding Withdrawal deadlines for Summer sessions.

D. ALTERNATE SCHEDULE

1. In special cases where a student has a personal or academic need that requires a reduction in the number of units they are enrolled in, an alternate 'flex' schedule may be offered. Flex schedules are dictated by pre- and co-requisite requirements for courses. Students on a flex schedule should expect an impact on financial aid availability and a delayed graduation of one year or more. The Director of the DPT Program designs flex schedule options and administers them in coordination with the Director of Student Services. The Director of the DPT Program must approve a student's transition to a flex schedule. Transitions to a flex schedule must be completed prior to the first final exam in an applicant's term.

E. TIME TO DEGREE COMPLETION

Students will not be approved to attempt to complete courses in a given term more than twice. The first year of the DPT program must be completed within two years of admission to the DPT program. Cumulative delays will not be approved that extend graduation exceed **1.5x** the total duration of the program (4.5 years).

F. SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING PATHWAY COURSE AVAILABILITY

1. **Students should be aware that the Division will cease to offer hybrid pathway coursework in the following years:**
 - a. DPT 1 coursework in the 2026-2027 academic year
 - b. DPT 2 coursework in the 2027-2028 academic year
 - c. DPT 3 coursework in the 2028-2029 academic year
2. Courses will not be available in the hybrid pathway model after these years. Thus, to stay in the hybrid pathway model, students must stay on pace for graduation no later than May 2029. Students enrolled in the hybrid pathway in the class of 2028 who require delayed coursework (due to Voluntary Health Leave of Absence, Mandated Health Leave of Absence, Personal Leave of Absence, or Alternate Schedule [i.e. flex schedule], to retake a failed course, or in the case of successful appeal after dismissal) can only be offered courses in the residential pathway. Taking courses in the residential pathway will require that the student attend classes in person, on campus. This will necessitate regular (daily) travel to the USC Health Science Campus.
 - a. Students entering the USC DPT program in the hybrid pathway model in the 2025-2026 academic year should expect to transition to the residential pathway model if their graduation is approved for extension beyond May 2028.

XV. READMISSION FOLLOWING VOLUNTARY HEALTH LEAVE OF ABSENCE, PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL

The procedures for establishing programs for readmitted students have been purposefully left flexible in order to better respond to the needs of individual students.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING PATHWAY AVAILABILITY

Students admitted to the hybrid pathway should take care to review the special note addressed in item XIV, Section F of this handbook.

A. RETURN FROM A VOLUNTARY HEALTH LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. Health LOA's are coordinated with the [USC Office of Support and Intervention](#).
2. The authority to grant a health leave and permission to return from a health leave resides with the university's Health Leave Team, in consultation with the student's academic unit, treatment providers, and relevant campus partners. The Health Leave Coordinator aims to support the student through the process, providing information about the tasks associated with a health leave and helping the student to develop and implement a plan to facilitate their recovery and return to school.

3. More information can be found here (<https://campussupport.usc.edu/students/health-and-wellness/health-leave-of-absence/>).

B. RETURN FROM PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. The Director of Student Services and the DPT Program Director will create a plan for returning from a LOA on an individual basis, working in concert with the student and any relevant faculty.
2. The duration, timing of the return, and planned coursework will be determined and agreed upon based on the individual student's circumstances.

C. OPTIONS FOR READMISSION AFTER WITHDRAWAL

1. The Admissions Committee will consider readmission applications for positions in the entering first-year class.
2. The DPT Program Director and Division Chair in consultation with appropriate faculty will consider petitions for readmission to a class other than the entering first-year class.
3. Procedures for Applying for Readmission
 - a. A person applying for readmission must submit a petition in writing to the DPT Program Director for referral to the faculty no later than four months (120 days) prior to the date of proposed or desired readmission. This petition should clearly state the reasons why readmission should be granted.
 - b. Upon acceptance of a readmission petition, the DPT Program Director in consultation with appropriate faculty will:
 - i. Determine the readmission level.
 - ii. Request appropriate faculty to develop a precise academic program.
 - iii. Maintain the readmitted student on the academic status in existence at the end of the last completed academic term.
 - c. All grades received by the readmitted student remain on the official transcript, but for purposes of determining student academic status, GPA determinations for readmitted students will follow one of the procedures below:
 - i. GPA will be computed only upon grades received following readmission to the first-year class.

- ii. GPA will be computed only upon grades received during completed academic terms.

XVI. UNIVERSITY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND NATIONAL LICENSURE EXAM POLICY

A. University Graduation Requirements/Reporting of Graduation Date

1. A minimal cumulative GPA of 2.75 is required in the DPT program to qualify for graduation. See the University Catalog.
2. The University officially awards degrees three times a year: May, August and December. The Division participates in the University convocation ceremony, which is in May. The Division Convocation occurs at this time.
3. Most DPT students graduate in May, unless remedial course work is required. Students who are scheduled to finish remedial course work within six months of the May convocation ceremony may elect to participate. Any student scheduled to complete remedial course work later than six months after convocation will participate in the following year's May convocation ceremony.
 - a. States vary in their policies regarding graduation date and licensing exam eligibility. It is the student's responsibility to determine the requirements of the state in which they will be taking the exam. It is also the student's responsibility to be sure all deadlines are met for the various State Board Exams.

B. Commencement and Convocation Ceremonies

- a. Each May the University honors its graduates by holding a commencement ceremony on the University Park Campus. All graduating students are encouraged to attend. The Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy is represented by Faculty Marshalls, and by those members of the graduating class and faculty who choose to attend.
- b. Individual schools within the University also hold their own satellite ceremonies in addition to the main University ceremony. These are scheduled after the University's ceremony and may take place on either the University Park Campus or the Health Sciences Campus. The Director of Student Services and other Division staff inform students of specific details related to the ceremony.

C. Verification of Graduation to Federation of State Boards

- a. The Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy validates to the Federation of State Boards that graduates have completed the program

- and are eligible to sit for the national licensure exam upon students' completion of all graduation requirements.
- b. Students may apply to be validated to sit for the national licensure exam within 90 days of anticipated graduation by meeting ALL of the following requirements:
 - i. Complete an initial Division-provided Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy 'Practice Exam and Assessment Tool' (PEAT) no later than 10 weeks prior to the intended national exam registration deadline.
 - ii. Pass (with an official score of 600 or greater) a second, Division-provided and proctored Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy 'Practice Exam and Assessment Tool' (PEAT) on a date provided by the Division, approximately four weeks prior to the intended national exam registration deadline.
 - iii. Have resolved any Academic, Clinical, or Professionalism Warning or Probation status in the preceding term.
 - iv. Have no outstanding clinical education experiences to complete and are on track to pass all remaining coursework (clinical and academic) within 90 days.
 - c. Students validated to sit for the national licensure exam within 90 days of anticipated graduation are permitted an excused absence for the day of the exam. No other absence days are permitted related to studying for or taking the national licensure exam.

XVII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. *Divisional Fees*

All outstanding Divisional fees for library books, printing, etc., must be paid by the end of each academic term. Outstanding debts for fees may result in course grades designated MG (missing grade) or a delay of graduation.

B. *Parking Regulations*

Parking on any USC campus is by permit only. Students are eligible to purchase parking permits at the beginning of each semester for the entire semester and for particular calendar days (e.g. for immersion experiences). Parking permits purchased for Health Sciences Campus parking lots are also honored at some University Park Campus lots.

Students may pay for campus parking each day, as space is available. Off campus street parking is also available at metered spaces that are rigorously enforced. Students who park on the street should be sure to lock their vehicle and that no valuables are visible. Students should never climb over or under a parked train when attempting to access campus from off-site street parking. Doing so risks both severe bodily harm and legal consequences.

C. Care of Divisional Facilities

Students must assume responsibility for the care of classrooms, laboratories, meeting rooms and hallway/stairs. Food and drink restrictions are to be closely observed. Should an accidental spill or forceful blow occur that causes damage to a piece of equipment, furniture, carpet, or walls/ doors, please report the problem immediately to the Administrative Coordinator at the front desk of the PT Office, CHP 155. Your timely reporting of accidental damage is viewed as a considerate gesture so that appropriate maintenance of the facility is possible.

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The University officially awards degrees three times a year: May, August and December. The Division participates in the University convocation ceremony, which is in May. The Division Convocation occurs at this time.

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F. Procedure for Filing a Complaint with the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)

Any person may submit to CAPTE a complaint about an accredited or developing program. The formal procedure for filing a complaint can be found in the CAPTE Accreditation Handbook under the heading "[Part 11 - Procedures for Handling Complaints About an Accredited or Developing Physical Therapy Education Program](https://www.capteonline.org/about-capte/policies-and-procedures/accreditation-handbook/rules-of-practice-and-procedure)". The CAPTE Accreditation Handbook can be accessed from the APTA web page and is found in PDF form at the following URL:
<https://www.capteonline.org/about-capte/policies-and-procedures/accreditation-handbook/rules-of-practice-and-procedure>

SECTION 2 STUDENT SUPPORT

I. GENERAL

General access to USC student resources can be found online including the following locations:

- Information Technology: <https://itservices.usc.edu/>
- Wireless Network: <https://itservices.usc.edu/wireless/>
- Norris Medical Library Resources: <https://libraries.usc.edu/locations/norris-medical-library>
- USC Student Handbook: <https://policy.usc.edu/studenthandbook/>
- Student Support and Care Resources: <https://communityexpectations.usc.edu/student-resources/>

II. STUDENT MENTORING: USC DPT Mentor Program

Commencing graduate training is a significant transition and presents many new challenges that require relatively rapid adaptation, both academically and personally. Optimally navigating the demands of a rigorous curriculum and developing the professional foundations for successful entry into the general practice of physical therapy also require a healthy, balanced personal foundation. The faculty, mindful of the transformations required of the graduate student, created the USC DPT Mentor Program in 2010. It is the faculty's intent that every student knows we care about your professional development. We want each student to feel there is someone on faculty they can reach out to for guidance and encouragement. The DPT Mentor Program was structurally designed so that all students are assured a faculty advocate. To our knowledge, the USC DPT Mentor Program is a unique program offered by faculty on behalf of graduate physical therapy students during professional training.

- A. **Purpose:** Thus, the purpose of the USC DPT Mentoring Program is to provide each student a faculty mentor who will assist the student in navigating the DPT curriculum and provide guidance during the student's professional training and development.
- B. **Goals:** The goals of the USC DPT Mentoring Program are to help students succeed in the program and to begin forming the foundations for a successful professional career.
- C. **Mentor Description and Roles:**
1. All mentors are faculty members in the Division and very familiar with various aspects of the DPT curriculum. You will encounter many of the participating faculty in the classroom or lab at some point in the three years of the DPT program, and/or in one of the Division's Faculty Practices.

2. A faculty mentor is assigned to each student by Director of the Mentor Program (Dr. Amy Pomrantz) preceding the start of the program and they serve as the student's mentor throughout the three years of the curriculum. If for any reason, a student wishes to be reassigned to another mentor, please contact Dr. Pomrantz for assistance.
3. The faculty mentor serves as an advocate on behalf of the mentee, getting to know them, helping them to navigate the curriculum, assist in identifying resources for academic and professional development, and can help mentees connect with other faculty or opportunities within the Division and/or other programs aligned with the mentee's interests.

D. The Mentor Process:

1. **Meetings:** The student and faculty mentor meet during the first month of each fall and spring semester. The Director of the DPT Mentor Program (Dr. Amy Pomrantz) contacts all students and mentors the first week of class as a reminder to schedule the meeting in a comfortable setting on campus, in the clinic or online.
2. **Topics:** Initially meetings focus on getting better acquainted and any questions you may have about the program, the Division, strategies for finding a healthy balance or ways to embrace your new environment, like getting to know Los Angeles. As you progress through the curriculum, your discussions may explore ways to get more involved in areas of personal interest, reflection on experiences, questions or ideas that emerged during a recent clinical rotation.
3. **Professional networking:** Getting acquainted with your mentor will provide opportunity to begin professional networking. Your mentor's areas of expertise may be outside the scope of practice that drew you to physical therapy. Also, your areas of interest will likely expand as you are introduced to areas of physical therapy practice you have not been previously experienced. Engaging with your mentor will be opportunity to broaden your network and vision of physical therapy practice. Your mentor can also help you identify additional mentors to expand your professional development network or support your interest in reaching outside your comfort zone.

Having gotten to know you over the three years, your mentor will be in an excellent position to provide recommendations for clinical rotations, jobs and/or residencies. You may even decide after graduation to reach out to your mentor as you consider moving to a new job, beginning a residency or returning to school.

III. STUDENT TUTORING

The Division is committed to providing support for students who are experiencing academic difficulty. The primary avenues for this support are through active participation in office hours with course instructors and working with course faculty by appointment. For those students who need additional assistance, the Division has organized an optional tutoring program in which select DPT II students who have been approved by the Course Directors serve as tutors for DPT I students. Division sponsored tutoring is only available in the first year as it is dependent upon the availability of more senior students.

Criteria for Division Sponsored Tutoring

The number of available tutors is limited, therefore priority for tutors will be given to students who are having academic difficulty:

1. Student has received a grade of $\leq$ B– on a mid-term examination.
2. Tutoring Application has been submitted.
3. Approval is granted by the Course Director.

Procedure for Obtaining Division Organized Tutoring

- Participation in these tutoring options require the submission of a Tutoring Application form which will be provided each semester by the Director of Student Services
 - Students must obtain written approval from the appropriate course director. Approval is to be uploaded to the tutoring application form
 - .

Tutoring Options

1. Free, small group tutoring lead by DPT II students
 - a. Attendance in these groups is by Division approval only
 - b. To participate, students are required to continue to attend the relevant course office hours.
2. Paid private tutoring with DPT II students
 - a. The student is responsible for the costs associated with private tutoring.

IV. HEALTH SERVICES

Health (Medical and Counseling) services are available on the Health Sciences Campus. The Eric Cohen Student Health Center is located at: 1510 San Pablo St., HealthCare Consultation Center I, 1st Floor, Los Angeles, California 90033. The clinic is open Monday – Saturday, see Eric Cohen Student Health website for schedule. Appointments can be made by through MySHR or by calling 323-740-WELL. After hours you will be connected to the registered nurse and/or physician on call.

Students in the Residential pathway can access all in person and telehealth options through Eric Cohen Student Health

Students in the hybrid pathway can access the Eric Cohen Student Health Center in person if they pay the student health fee or by paying out of pocket for services. Because Eric Cohen Student Health cannot provide telehealth resources to students

outside of the state of California, Students in the hybrid pathway can also access limited counseling services through Uwill by following this link (<https://app.uwill.com/register/>) to the Uwill portal, creating an account with your USC email, and connecting with a clinician. Additionally, remote services from the Eric Cohen Student Health Center may be available for Counseling (limited by state licensure laws to those in California) – contact the Student Services office for information (studentaffairs@pt.usc.edu).

V. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EQUAL ACCESS

Disability Services and Programs (DSP) is dedicated to maintaining an environment that ensures all students with documented disabilities at USC have equal access to its educational programs, activities and facilities. The accommodations are designed to level the playing field for students with disabilities, while maintaining the integrity and standards of USC's academic programs.

Procedure for Requesting Accommodations

1. Those students who need to request accommodations must register online with the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) within the first week of **each** academic term to discuss individual needs and arrange appropriate support services and strategies. (Email: osasfrontdesk@usc.edu; <https://osas.usc.edu/>; phone: 213-740-0776) Registering with OSAS is confidential and will allow accommodations to be granted for a physical disability or a learning disability. This office is located on the on the University Park Campus: 3601 Watt Way, Grace Ford Salvatori (GFS) 120, Los Angeles, CA 90089.
2. A letter from OSAS specifying the necessary accommodations must be submitted to the Director of Student Services at the beginning of **each** academic term.
3. In addition, the student must provide a copy of the accommodation letter to each Course Director and discuss with them their individual needs.
4. ***There will be no accommodations provided without this clearance from OSAS***; hence, students are highly encouraged to initiate the process early in the academic term prior to the start of academic term exams.

SECTION 3 ANATOMY LABORATORY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Our anatomy lab provides an indispensable learning tool; however, it does pose health and safety risks that need to be considered and addressed. Below is a list of work practices that must be followed during all laboratory and prep sessions.

- 1) Students are not permitted, under any circumstances, to capture photographs or record video of cadavers. If photography is necessary, permission must be obtained from the Anatomical Gift Program from the responsible faculty and the images captured with an approved device.
- 2) Use of the lab is restricted to enrolled students of the course(s) held in the lab. Outside/unauthorized individuals are prohibited from access to the anatomy laboratory (see use of laboratory below).
- 3) Do not eat or drink while in the anatomy lab. Food and drink are not permitted.
- 4) Wear closed toed shoes and appropriate clothing (scrubs with long pants) at all times.
- 5) Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are required and include but are not limited to:
 - a. Non-sterile nitrile examination gloves when handling specimens, cadavers, or waste materials
 - i. Gloves should not be worn outside the lab or used to open doors in the hallway to prevent contamination.
 - ii. Change gloves when damaged.
 - iii. Wash hands and any exposed skin after removing gloves.
 - b. Disposable gowns when dissecting
 - c. Eye protection and face shield when using power tools in the lab (i.e., bone saws)
- 6) Keep donors covered in cloth sheet and plastic covering when not in use.
- 7) Only expose the part of the cadaver or specimen that you will be using during the session.
- 8) Clean and put away all dissection tools after use.
- 9) Report injuries or problems to the laboratory supervisor as soon as possible.
- 10) If you are pregnant or considering pregnancy during the course of participating in cadaver study, you should consult with your physician for their recommendations regarding participation.

I. Cadaver Care

The donated bodies in this program come from generous people who have willed their bodies for the purposes of education and research. As a participant in the laboratory, you are privileged to have the opportunity to use this material. The donated bodies are to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity.

- A. Do not remove the ID tag from the ear or toe of the cadavers.
- B. Do not remove any human tissue or other materials obtained during dissection from the assigned dissection table without permission from one of the instructors.
- C. Keep the tissues moist at all times so that they can be used for the entire year. Do this by keeping the bodies covered when not in use, only exposing necessary areas, and spraying the bodies with wetting fluid when necessary.
- D. Inappropriate or improper comments about the body will not be tolerated.

II. Bone Box Care

- 1) Each bone box contains approximately one-half of a human skeleton and a plastic skull. These materials are extremely valuable educational specimens.
- 2) At the beginning of fall, a bone box will be assigned to your lab group. You will inventory and sign a check-out form, and then return the box after spring term.
- 3) If any bones are lost or damaged, the Division must be reimbursed for the cost of replacement.

III. Disposal of Materials

Because of the chemicals involved in embalming, appropriate care must be taken when disposing of all materials in the laboratory.

- 1) Dispose of all scalpel blades and other sharps in red "SHARPS" containers.
- 2) Human tissue from the cadaver (adipose tissue, fascia, etc.) must be put into the white buckets corresponding to that cadaver.
- 3) Fluid from the cadaver drains into metal buckets under the tables. Dispose of these fluids by dumping them into the large bio-waste container frequently, or at least when the bucket is half full.
- 4) Dispose of other materials in Biohazard waste bins. Used gloves should only be disposed of in the Biohazard bins, not in any trash containers outside of lab.

IV. Location of Tissues

The Anatomical Gift Program allows retention of tissues in some cases. These tissues must be specifically requested and accepted prior to retention. These specimens are de-identified, cataloged, and kept in a cold room outside of the cadaver laboratory. They must remain in the locked 'cold box' unless they are being used for instruction or preparation. Materials must be returned to the cold box as soon as possible after use. These tissues are returned to the Anatomical Gift Program when they are unfit for future use.

V. Use of the Laboratory

Anatomy instructors, including teaching assistants, and DPTI students have unlimited access to the cadaver laboratory. All other students taking courses that involve cadaver study should only use the laboratory during class hours or scheduled open lab sessions. Any other individuals must request permission to use the laboratory and schedule time in the lab with a lab supervisor.

Any violations or disregard for the care of the cadavers will be reported to the Anatomical Gift Program and escalated as appropriate.

SECTION 4 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICIES

I. PHILOSOPHY and POSITION STATEMENT

The university as an instrument of learning is predicated on the existence of an environment of integrity. Since its founding, the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Faculty, students and administrative officials, as members of the academic community, share the responsibility for maintaining this environment. Any discussion of academic integrity and an honor code in the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy must start with the OATH OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST, authored by the Division's former chair, Dr. Helen Hislop:

II. OATH OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST

I pledge to hold faithful to my responsibility as a physical therapist;
To use the highest science and skills of my profession at all times;
To exercise judgment to the highest degree of which I am capable when determining treatment to be offered;
To refrain from treatment when it will not benefit the patient;
To always place the welfare of my patients above my own self-interest.
I pledge to uphold and preserve the rights and esteem of every person placed in my care;
To hold all confidences in trust;
To exercise all aspects of my calling with dignity and honor.
I commit myself to the highest ideal of service, learning and the pursuit of knowledge.
These things I do swear.

To hold faithful to one's responsibility as a physical therapist, one must maintain a priority of ethical treatment and use of knowledge. In order to exercise professional judgement to the highest degree, one must act honestly for the sake of one's patients. This must start with the therapist's education.

Dishonesty, in any form, is intolerable, and can lead to disciplinary action including dismissal from the program. Academic dishonesty is wrong because it causes harm to patients, specifically the future patients of a student. Such dishonesty violates the most fundamental assumption of professional health care. When we are working with patients, we must assume that all our colleagues are being honest at all times. If a therapist says that they checked a patient's blood pressure, but actually did not, it could lead to great harm to the patient. If a student says that they know certain information or how to perform a particular skill, but in fact don't (because they cheated), it could cause harm to a patient. In health care, honesty is a fundamental ethical responsibility. Without it, the system fails.

Students share a responsibility for maintaining standards of academic performance and classroom behavior conducive to the learning process. The faculty presume that every student in the Division has sufficient maturity, moral compass and concern for the rights of others, particularly of their future patients, such that they will maintain the standards of conduct of the academic community. These standards are outlined in the next section and in the [USC Student Handbook](#).

III. RESOURCES

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is defined in detail in the [USC Student Handbook](#) (Integrity and Accountability: Student Community Expectations) with respect to plagiarism, cheating, and other violations. The DPT Program upholds the USC Student Handbook statement that “Academic integrity is ultimately the sole guarantor of the legitimacy of one’s education, and therefore, is vitally important not just for oneself, but for the entire USC community. The value of all USC degrees is negatively impacted by violations of academic integrity.”

Details regarding the procedures to be followed in cases of alleged academic dishonesty are described in the following sections, as well as in the USC Faculty Handbook, and in the [USC Student Handbook](#). With respect to allegations of student misconduct, the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, as part of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry, has been delegated the authority to conduct independent reviews, render decisions, and determine appropriate sanctions/outcomes in cases of alleged academic integrity or professional standards violations. This authority does not preclude the university from adjudicating matters concerning the behavior of students from these schools. These graduate/professional schools must meet standards of procedural fairness in processing alleged violations. The above does not apply to reports of discrimination and harassment, including sexual misconduct, based on a protected characteristic or related retaliation. Such reports for these schools, as with any others, must be referred to the [EEO-TIX Office](#).

The Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy supports students in their efforts to maintain academic honesty.

IV. SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS for ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Division expects that our students will adhere to proctoring policies and guidelines for independent and group student work as follows:

- A. All coursework submitted must be your own and produced exclusively for the course in which the student is enrolled. Submitting work produced all or in part by artificial intelligence (AI) tools is not permitted unless AI is explicitly stated as a permitted tool for creating an assignment, project, or for completing a course activity. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Violations for plagiarism will be taken seriously and may result in an "F" for the course and/or dismissal from the program. [See](#)

Section 4V for further details regarding appropriate and inappropriate use of AI in the classroom and clinic setting.

- B. Group projects are commonly used throughout the program. The Course Director will clarify the expectations and effort expected of individual group members as well as the group as a whole. For individual assignments, Course Directors will clarify the level of collaborative work that is or is not acceptable. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are compliant with course expectations. If it is not clear to you, then discuss your questions with the Course Director.
- C. For on-campus written examinations, no backpacks, book bags, or purses are allowed in the testing room. Students should put these items in their lockers prior to coming to the exam. In special testing situations such as during sequestered testing, the proctor can establish a secure place away from the testing area where these items may be stored.
- D. Students in the hybrid pathway of the program are required to use remote proctoring software for exams when directed by the Course Director. Remote proctoring requires that students share access a functional room microphone and video camera at all times during exams. The student's face must be visible at all times during the exam. Students may NOT have anyone else in the room, have any sound devices playing or recording, have notes or other resources visible to them, or have access to additional electronic devices (must be OFF with a single exception: calling for technical support). Students must complete full room scan (instructions will be provided) at the start of exam and in the event of exam disruption.
- E. Students are not permitted to wear digital watches, smart glasses, recording devices, head coverings (except for religious purposes), or have cell phones or other devices within reach during exams.
- F. The Course Director will identify specific testing materials allowed during examinations. Unless otherwise instructed, no other materials other than those specifically identified may be used during written or practical exams.
- G. Students are not allowed to ask questions during the examination since this may lead to an unfair advantage to students seeking additional clarification.
- H. Students are expected to maintain confidentiality of all examinations including refraining from discussing the practical examinations with other students who have not completed their exam. Should another student try to discuss it with you it is your obligation to remind them not to discuss it. Inform them that if they persist you are obligated to report their actions to the faculty. It is the student's responsibility to report another student who insists on discussing an examination even after being asked not to do so.
- I. Students are not allowed to leave the testing location once the exam has begun even for bathroom breaks. If the exam is lengthy (greater than 2.25 hours), faculty will provide the exam in two parts and provide a break in between. Completion and handing in of the first part would allow the student to take a bathroom break if necessary. The only exceptions will be for students with documented health conditions requiring frequent breaks. Such special accommodations must be documented through the Office of Disability Services **(see Accommodations for Equal Access section of the Student Handbook)**.

V. SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE USE OF AI

University Policies on the use of AI are available at the following links:

- [Generative AI general policy](#)
- [Practical tips on using AI in academic work](#)
- [Office of academic integrity](#)

University enterprise resources are provided here:

- <https://ai.usc.edu/tools/>

The following guidelines provide more detail about appropriate use of AI in the classroom.*

Cognitive Unloading: refers to the process of reducing the mental effort a person must exert to complete a task by shifting some of that effort onto external aids—such as tools, technologies, or other people. In the context of education and learning, cognitive unloading occurs when students rely on support (like AI, notes, or calculators) to handle tasks that would otherwise require their own reasoning, memory, or problem-solving.

LEVEL 1: SUPPORTIVE USE (PERMISSIBLE)

1. Cognitive Unloading: *Minimal*

2. Description: AI assists with productivity or clarity, but does not contribute to the core academic task.

Examples:

- Grammar or spelling correction
- Reference formatting (e.g., APA style)
- Summarizing instructor feedback
- Study schedule generation

3. Honor Policy Status: Allowed. Disclosure Not Required

LEVEL 2: AUGMENTED LEARNING (PERMISSIBLE WITH TRANSPARENCY)

1. Cognitive Unloading: *Low to Moderate*

2. Description: AI supports understanding or scaffolds ideas, but the student still does the substantive academic thinking.

Examples:

- Generating outlines that the student expands
- Asking AI to explain complex terms or concepts
- Brainstorming examples or case ideas
- Reviewing evidence summaries to locate relevant articles

3. Honor Policy Status: *Acceptable with clear student ownership*.

Disclosure required. When work is submitted, a description should be provided that explains how AI was used to support the work. The AI tool

can also be cited with a link to the prompt(s) and response(s) used to support the work.

LEVEL 3: COGNITIVE SUBSTITUTION (CONCERNING USE)

1. Cognitive Unloading: *Moderate to High*
2. Description: AI produces content that the student uses with limited modification. The student's intellectual role is diminished.

Examples:

- Submitting AI-written paragraphs or assignments
- Using AI to analyze case studies without additional synthesis
- Asking AI to answer prompts and submitting with only minor edits

3. Honor Policy Status: *Likely inappropriate unless explicitly outlined as permitted in assignment instructions*. Requires instructor permission, guidance, and full disclosure.

LEVEL 4: COGNITIVE REPLACEMENT (ACADEMIC DISHONESTY)

1. Cognitive Unloading: *High to Total*
2. Description: AI performs the core intellectual work, and the student submits it as their own.

Examples:

- Submitting an AI-generated care plan, SOAP note, or essay
- Using AI to take or complete assessments
- Copy-pasting responses with no revision or critical review

3. Honor Policy Status: *Clear violation*. Represents academic misconduct.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE CLINICAL EDUCATION SETTING*

The follow guidelines provide more detail about appropriate use of AI in the clinical education setting:

Students are permitted to use health-specific HIPAA-compliant AI tools in the clinical education setting provided that the specific tool(s) and usage is approved by the clinical facility with disclosure to and permission from the clinical instructor. When using HIPAA-compliant AI tools in the clinic, students must follow the policies of the clinical facility. Sites and clinical instructors may request the student not use AI in the clinic initially in order to be able to assess the starting point of student knowledge or skills. The use of non-HIPAA complaint AI (generative AI) in the clinic should only be used under the following guidelines to ensure HIPAA safeguards for patients and clients:

LEVEL 1: Fully Compliant (Safe for Use with Non-HIPAA Compliant AI Tools)

Example:

"Help rephrase this summary: 'A middle-aged patient with a history of diabetes presents with chest pain and dizziness. Initial workup includes ECG and cardiac enzymes. The plan includes telemetry monitoring and cardiology consult.' I want it to be more concise and clinically polished."

Why This Is Compliant:

- There are no direct or indirect identifiers, and the case is fully abstracted.
- Patient is generically described
- No dates, locations, or distinctive procedures
- Request is framed around language refinement, not clinical decision-making
- Safe for use in non-HIPAA environments

LEVEL 2: Borderline Compliant (Technically De-identified but Risky in Practice)

Example:

"Can you help organize a clinical note for a late-middle-aged female patient with a history of diabetes who recently presented with chest pain and dizziness requiring hospital admission. She had a cardiac procedure two years ago."

Why This Is Borderline:

- This version removes geographic and temporal specifics, uses a vague age category, and excludes facility names and dates. Technically, it may pass HIPAA's de-identification criteria, but depending on context (e.g., rare condition, small practice), risk of re-identification still exists.

This would be appropriate only in internal secure workflows or controlled environments, not in public or general-purpose AI tools. Students must also consider whether such requests replace their skill set (e.g. how to organize a clinical note)

LEVEL 3: Subtle Violation (Contextually Identifiable, Non-Compliant)

Example:

"Assist me with an HPI for a 58-year-old woman from Asheville, NC who was admitted to a local hospital last week after experiencing sudden chest pain and dizziness. She has a known history of diabetes and had a cardiac procedure two years ago."

Why It Violates HIPAA

- Though it removes the most explicit identifiers, it retains indirect identifiers that, when combined, could allow for re-identification:
 - Smaller city or setting
 - Exact age
 - Specific location
 - Temporal detail ("last week")
 - Distinctive medical history

LEVEL 4: Gross Violation (Blatantly Non-Compliant)

Example:

"Help me draft a clinical note for Jane Williams, a 58-year-old female born July 14, 1966, who lives at 982 Winding Creek Drive, Asheville, NC. She was admitted to Mission Hospital on March 27 after experiencing acute chest pain and dizziness. Her patient ID is 00349821. She has a history of Type 2 diabetes and underwent a left heart catheterization two years ago."

Why It Violates HIPAA:

- This input includes multiple direct identifiers (full name, full address, date of birth, hospital name, and medical record number). It fails on all counts of privacy protection and should never be entered into a non-HIPAA compliant system.

Source: Reproduced with permission from the University of New Mexico DPT program.

VI. VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A. Definitions of Dishonest Behaviors

1. Suspicious behaviors include but are not limited to:
 - a. Inter-student request for help during an exam.
 - b. Prolonged, repeated gazing at another person's exam or away from the computer/iPad screen.
 - c. Apparent codes being transmitted.
 - d. Apparent or reported data fabrication in a class or research project.
 - e. Leaving the room during an examination.
2. Blatant acts include but are not limited to:
 - a. Possession of any unauthorized papers (e.g., cheat sheets, class notes or other unauthorized materials) during an exam.
 - b. Continuing to write after exam has ended.
 - c. Observed exchange of answers.
 - d. Making or taking copies of exam questions or notes about exams out of the proctoring room (students in the hybrid pathway must seal provided scratch paper or notes in an envelope in the testing environment and follow provided exam security procedures).
 - e. Identifiable plagiarism, defined as "the submission of material authored by another person or by an artificial intelligence tool but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form; the submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style; improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers (**Refer to the [USC Student Handbook](#)**).
3. Documented data fabrication (from Academic Integrity: A Guide for Graduate Students)

The invention or alteration of data, information, or citation in any academic exercise constitutes a violation of academic integrity. This includes fabrication of material submitted for lab assignments, whether wholly or partially falsified.

- a. Failure to adhere to requirements of patient/subject safety in research.
- b. Taking exam from room and later claiming that the instructor lost it.
- c. Inappropriate activity related to an exam in electronic delivery and proctoring systems.
- d. Obtaining a copy of an exam or answer key prior to administration.

4. Unauthorized Collaboration (from Academic Integrity: A Guide for Graduate Students)

Collaborative projects and assignments may be required in preparation for professional practice. Graduate students should be aware that, unless explicitly directed or granted permission to work collaboratively on assignments, the expectation will be that a student has accomplished academic work entirely independent of assistance from fellow students or other persons.

5. Authorized Collaboration

When collaboration is explicitly directed, it is expected that all students will contribute equally to the final project or assignment. A student claiming to contribute equally to a project that did not do so will be guilty of plagiarism.

B. *Responsibility*

1. It is the ethical responsibility of each student to report any suspected or blatant act of dishonesty on the part of others. Students who observe an act of academic or other dishonesty among one/or more of their peers should be willing to put the circumstances in writing and submit to the Director of the DPT Program, Director of Didactic and Laboratory Education, or Director of Student Services. The reporting student's identity kept in strictest confidence.
2. The Director of the DPT Program, upon consultation with the appropriate faculty and members of the DPT Program Director's Council adjudicates all concerns within the Division related to academic honesty and student academic and clinical performance. Appeals to decisions made by the DPT Program Director are described in Section 6 of the Student Handbook.

C. *Consequences of a Violation of Academic Integrity*

Any student found guilty of violating academic integrity, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on exams or purchasing papers or other assignments may immediately receive a failing grade in the course and may be dismissed as a candidate for a degree from the Division (Refer to the [USC Student Handbook](#) and to the [Office of Academic Integrity](#)).

1. Student/Proctor Mechanisms for reporting acts in violation of academic integrity:
The student or proctor will report each observed behavior to the Course Director at the time of the incident. This report will be held confidential unless a hearing results.
2. Faculty action – Suspicious behaviors
 - a. First Offense – The Course Director (or research sponsor) shall engage in a discussion about the suspicious behavior with the accused student and report the incident to the DPT Program Director.
 - i. The DPT Program Director or their designee will meet with the student and the Course Director to discuss the allegation and seek resolution.
 - ii. The student will be warned that no further suspicious behaviors will be tolerated and example consequences to address and prevent future suspicious behavior are listed in Section 4.V.5.C.4.
 - b. Repeat Offenses - If the DPT Program Director receives more than one report (of separate incidents) about a given student, the information will be transmitted to the DPT Directors' Council. The student so accused will be informed of this action.
 - c. Faculty Recommendations - The DPT Directors' Council will consider the situation or evidence and will make recommendations for action to the DPT Program Director.
 - d. The DPT Directors' Council and DPT Program Director may refer a case that cannot be resolved with the program to the University Office of Academic Integrity for Administrative Review.
 - e. Information regarding the incident will be placed into the student's permanent file.
3. Faculty action - Blatant acts
 - a. The Course Director should confront the accused privately, confiscate any evidence, and report the incident to the DPT Program Director.
 - b. The DPT Program Director or their designee will meet with the student and the Course Director to discuss the allegation and the evidence. The student will be informed that the evidence will be submitted to the DPT Directors' Council for review.
 - c. Evidence will be submitted to the DPT Directors' Council for recommendation to the DPT Program Director and Course Director.
 - a. Faculty Recommendations - The DPT Directors' Council will consider the situation and evidence and will make recommendations for action to the DPT Program Director and Course Director. Punitive action will be recommended based on the extent/severity of offense. See Section 4.V.5.C.5.
 - b. The DPT Directors' Council and DPT Program Director may refer a case that cannot be resolved with the program to the University Office of Academic Integrity for Administrative Review.

- d. Information regarding the incident will be placed into the student's permanent file.
- 4. Possible actions to be recommended by the Division - Suspicious behaviors
 - a. Dismissal of charges.
 - b. Written reprimand.
 - c. Zero grade on test or collection of appropriate data.
 - d. The student may be situated in future exams such that suspicious behaviors cannot result in cheating (e.g. seated at the front of the room, required to take exams in person, or otherwise isolated from other students' exams).
 - e. Forfeiture of rights to financial aid or scholarships.
 - f. Reduction of grade in course or removal from research project.
 - g. Placement on Academic Warning Status.
 - h. Interim suspension of one-year with option to return.
 - i. Dismissal from the program.
 - j. Withdrawal from the program without penalty (including sealing of records).
 - k. Other action deemed appropriate by the DPT Program Director, upon consultation with the appropriate faculty and the Directors' Council.
- 5. Possible actions to be recommended by Division - Blatant acts
 - a. Dropping of the course grade by one full letter.
 - b. F grade in course.
 - c. Recommendation of interim suspension.
 - d. Dismissal from the program.
 - e. Other action deemed appropriate by the DPT Program Director, upon consultation with the appropriate faculty and the Directors' Council.

VII. APPEALS PROCESS

1. See Section 6 of the Student Handbook for the appeals process

VIII. PROTECTION OF COPYRIGHT LAWS

Electronic or paper copies published academic journals may be retained for personal use only. Journal articles may not be distributed to multiple persons. Portions of current texts may be copied for personal use only. At no time may a complete text be copied (electronically or on paper). These are violations of copyright laws. Virtually all journals and textbooks are copyright protected.

Digital resources provided to students in the DPT program are the sole property of the University of Southern California. No person has the right to distribute these resources without written permission from the Director of the DPT Program. The Director of the DPT Program will only grant permission for use of video resources when the

circumstances of use fit the digital release form signed by individuals identifiable in the video content.

SECTION 5 STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION POLICY

I. GENERAL POLICIES

A. Eligibility for a Degree

A student is eligible for a degree in Physical Therapy if they have:

1. Successfully attained the quantitative and qualitative level expected in the curriculum in which enrolled. There must be:
 - a. No un-reconciled grades of C-, D, F, IN, or NC.
 - b. No conditions existing at the termination of the final academic term which would be grounds for academic probation, clinical probation, professionalism probation, or dismissal.
 - c. Successfully completed all requirements, coursework, and clinical internships.
 - d. Acquired a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75.
 - e. Fulfilled the financial obligations as well as all other obligations and requirements for graduation.

All of the stipulations described above must be completed before the student is considered a graduate eligible to take the State Licensure Examination.

B. Maintenance of University Academic Standards

All faculty members have the responsibility for implementation of the spirit and letter of the academic standards set forth by the Commission of Academic Standards and as published in the USC Faculty Handbook, the [USC Student Handbook](#), and the Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy Student Handbook.

II. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. General Policies

1. Responsible Parties: Director of DPT Program, Director of Didactic and Laboratory Education, Director of Student Services, Director of Clinical Education, Director of Admissions, Director of Faculty Services and Development, Course Directors, Residential Leads, Hybrid Leads, individual faculty and clinical instructors, faculty mentors, Semester Chairs, and the Division Chair.
2. Evaluation of student academic performance is determined through examinations and assignments as determined by the Course Director and can include one or more of the following procedures:

- a. Review mid-term reports from faculty regarding student performance.
- b. Review reports from Clinical Faculty and Clinical Instructor regarding student clinical performance.
- c. Review student's total academic record.
- d. Review the assignment of academic/clinical warning or probation to students.
- e. Recommend actions regarding academic status to the Divisional faculty.
- f. Receive and recommend actions on petitions for readmission received from disqualified students.
- g. Recommend development of academic programs for readmitted students

B. Academic Course Grades

Grades are issued by Course Directors to indicate to students their level of achievement, opportunities for improvement, and to provide information to the faculty regarding academic status.

The grading system used by the faculty in the Division is as follows:

1. Students can receive the following grades in Academic Courses:

- a. *Letter Grade System:*

93-100	A
92-90	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
< 60	F

- b. *W (Withdrawal):*

Courses dropped after the third week result in a mark of W. Students have until the end of the 12th week of the Fall and Spring semester to drop courses. Courses that are dropped by the end of the 3rd week do not appear on the transcript. A Course Director may not withdraw a student from a course. In exceptional cases students may petition to withdraw from a course after the twelfth week. Such petitions are rarely approved. Students may not withdraw from a course in which they have committed or have been accused of committing an academic integrity violation.

Contact the Division Student Services Office for information regarding Withdrawal deadlines for Summer sessions.

c. *UW (Unofficial Withdrawal):*

Assigned to students who have stopped attending prior to the drop deadline (end of week twelve) without officially withdrawing, the students' names will appear as official enrollees on the final grade sheet for the course. The UW will be computed in the GPA as zero grade points (as in the case of an F) and indicates a failure on the part of the student to assume the administrative responsibility of officially dropping a course.

d. *IN (Incomplete Work):*

IN (Incomplete) is assigned when work is not completed because of documented illness or other "emergency" occurring after the twelfth week of the academic semester. The Registrar's recommended definition of "emergency" is as follows: "A situation or event which could not be foreseen, and which is beyond the student's control and which prevents the student from taking the final examination or completing other work during the final examination period." Incomplete (IN) grades are only given for situations that prevent a student from completing course requirements prior to the day that grades are due at the end of the academic term. Students should contact the Director of the DPT Program or the Director of Student Services by phone or email to notify the Division of health conditions that are interfering with academic performance. The Division will respect the student's confidentiality of any health-related information that is shared.

The grade IN exists so there is a remedy for illness or emergency that occurs *after* the drop deadline (typically week 12 of the Fall or Spring semester). A student may not request an IN before the end of the twelfth week; the rationale is that the student still has the option to drop the course until the end of the twelfth week. Arrangements for the grade of IN and its completion must be initiated by the student and agreed to by the Course Director prior to the final examination. Supporting documentation (e.g. a letter from a physician) may be required. If an Incomplete is assigned as the student's grade, the Course Director is required to fill out an Assignment of an Incomplete (IN) and Requirements for Completion form which specifies to the student and to the Division the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date, and the weight to be assigned to work remaining to be done when the final grade is computed. Both the Course Director and student must sign the form with a copy of the form and its supporting documentation filed in the Division with the Student Services Office.

Time Limit for Completion of Incomplete Work:

Marks of IN must be completed within one calendar year from the date of the assignment of the IN. If not completed within the designated time, marks of IN automatically become marks of IX (expired incomplete) with the exception of non-letter-graded courses and are calculated in the Grade Point Average (GPA) as a grade of F (zero grade points). Every attempt will be made by the faculty to ensure that incomplete grades are completed prior to the start of the next academic term; however, in extenuating circumstances the student may be allowed to proceed in the curriculum with permission of the Director of the DPT Program.

C. Consequences of Grades of C or Below

1. The Grade of Fair (C) in Clinical/Procedure Courses:

When a final course grade of C is earned by a student in a clinical/procedure course, the faculty has the discretion to assign a student to a clinical faculty member for tutoring in clinical skills, or to a specific clinical facility for additional supervision during the clinical rotation. The decision of which clinical facility can best meet the student's needs will be recommended by the Director of Clinical Education based on input from the faculty.

2. The Grade of Less than Fair (C-), Poor (D) or Failure (F):

- a. A grade of Fair (C-), Poor (D) or Failure (F) is considered a non-passing grade within the DPT program. Non-passing grades require that the course be re-taken for a passing grade and course credit needed for graduation.
- b. If the grade of C-, D, or F is earned in a course that is a prerequisite to subsequent courses, then the student will not be allowed to register for those courses until the deficiency has been reconciled.
- c. If the grade of C-, D, or F is earned in a course that is not a prerequisite to subsequent courses, then the student will be allowed to register for subsequent courses while the grade is being reconciled.
- d. If the grade of C-, D, or F is obtained in a clinical procedure/clinical course, then the student will not be allowed to participate in the clinical experience relating to that clinical course until the deficient grade is reconciled.

3. The Grade of Less than Fair on Practical Examinations:

- a. A student must achieve a score of 73% on **each section** of the clinical course practical exams in order to pass the class, regardless of the final overall grade. If a score of less than 73% is earned, the student is allowed 2 retakes for the midterm and 1 retake for the final per section. Should a retake practical examination be required, if possible two faculty members will independently grade the student's performance, or the retest will be video recorded, to avoid bias in grading. One of the faculty testers will likely be the Course Director.

Regardless of the passing score on the retake exam, the student will receive a 73% for that section of the exam. If a 73% or greater is achieved on the retake, then the student may pass the class depending on their overall grade in the course.

- b. Because the Semester II midterm examinations occur before the PT 600a (2-week) clinical education experience, students must have passed the practical examination stations of PT 621 and PT 530a to attend this experience. Those who do not pass one or more of the stations must retake the station(s) they did not pass before they can be allowed to go on the clinical rotation.

D. Reconciliation of C-, D, F, NC, or IN Grades

1. General Policies:

- a. All courses attempted, whether required or elective, must be completed with a passing grade of C or higher. A student, therefore, will not meet the requirements for a graduate degree until final course grades of C-, D, F, NC, or IN are reconciled.
- b. The individual Course Director may provide a means by which a student can reconcile a deficient grade. The method of reconciliation is at the discretion of the Course Director, and may consist of either repeating a course or completing make-up work/exam.

c.

2. Reconciliation of Grades of C-, D, F or NC:

Students must register for and retake any course in which the final course grade was C-, D, F, or NC in order to reconcile that grade. Upon successful reconciliation of a C-, D, F, or NC, the Course Director will assign the new grade. The reconciled grade will then be added to the student's permanent academic record indicating that the course requirements were completed satisfactorily.

E. Questioning of a Final Course Grade

A student who believes that a grade issued to them was based on incomplete or inaccurate information should contact the Course Director as soon as the grades for the academic term are received. If this is verified, the Course Director may change the grade. A grade must be challenged by the student within the first three weeks of the subsequent academic term.

F. Procedure for Changing a Final Course Grade

Course Directors may issue a change of grade notice to the Office of the Registrar without the student completing a make-up procedure if:

1. The grade is changed from an IN to an F or NC
2. The initial grade was based on inaccurate information or resulted from a clerical error.

Changes in grades for any other reason must have the approval off the Director of the DPT Program and must be requested within the academic term following issuance of the final course grade.

III. CLINICAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Clinical Education Courses (PT 600a-d, PT 665, PT 660, and PT 670a-b) use the Credit - No Credit System to evaluate students engaged in PT clinical education experiences.

- CR - Credit, successful completion of the course.
- NC - NO CREDIT

Courses graded on a Credit-No Credit system are not computed into a student's GPA.

A. *Receiving a grade of NC*

NC in a clinical education experience is considered a failure. The student must re-register for the non-credited course units, and successfully complete the clinical education experience.

B. *Procedure for Reconciling a Final Course Grade of NC*

The Director of Clinical Education (DCE), with written and verbal feedback from the clinic's Clinical Instructor (CI) and Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE), will determine CR/NC status.

The DCE will document the rationale for the NC grade, indicate the steps necessary for reconciliation of the grade, and the time limit for such reconciliation. The DCE will confer with the faculty regarding the clinical recommendations.

The DCE will determine the most appropriate method for completing the clinical requirement. Options may include extending the current clinical education at the same site for a period of time, completing a partial clinical education experience at a new site, or completing a full clinical education experience at a new site. The student must meet all criteria for the clinical education experience at the end of the time period granted to successfully complete the requirements. If the criteria are met, the student will receive a Credit for the clinical education course.

If the student does not meet the prescribed minimum standards for a clinical education experience, the student will *not* be given credit for that experience.

1. If the student fails a 2-week clinical education experience, the student must repeat that experience.
2. If the student fails a 6-week clinical education experience after the first year, the student must either complete a remedial clinical education experience the next academic term (fall), continuing their didactic education on an altered academic schedule; or (with DPT Program Director and DPT Directors' Council Agreement) they may complete a remedial clinical education experience after the second year didactic and clinical courses, prior to beginning their third year.
3. If the student fails an 8-week clinical education experience after the second year, the student must complete a remedial clinical education experience prior to or after completion of the clinical education experiences in the third year.
4. If a student fails a 13- or 16-week clinical education experience in the third year, the student must complete a remedial clinical education experience of the same length following completion of the scheduled third year experiences.
5. A student who receives a NC for any clinical education experience will undergo a review by the DCE and Director of the DPT Program. If a student fails to meet minimum expectations in a remedial clinical education experience, two possibilities will exist:
 - The student will be considered for dismissal from the DPT program.
 - The student may be required to complete an additional make-up clinical education experience. The student must meet minimal performance criteria in the additional make-up experience, or the student will be dismissed.

IV. PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. *Expectations for Professional Performance*

Professional performance is vital to the success of each student physical therapist, the USC Physical Therapy program, and the Physical Therapy profession. The process of becoming an effective physical therapist involves attaining competency in professional knowledge, skill, and behavior. Thus, we will use the following professional behaviors valued by the Physical Therapy profession as a standard throughout this curriculum. The professional behaviors

and indicators for each behavior are adapted from work originally completed at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

1. Commitment to learning
 - a. Identifies problems
 - b. Formulates questions, and asks them in a respectful manner
 - c. Identifies need for further learning based on self-assessment, independently seeks resources
 - d. Prioritizes information needs, is able to subdivide large questions into components
 - e. Applies new information and re-evaluates performance and further learning needs
 - f. Accepts that there may be more than one answer to a problem
 - g. Reads articles critically and understands the limits of application to clinical practice
2. Interpersonal skills
 - a. Respects cultural and personal differences, is non-judgmental about others' lifestyles
 - b. Maintains confidentiality and patient privacy in all interactions
 - c. Demonstrates behaviors that contribute to a positive working environment
 - d. Establishes trust and motivates others to achieve
 - e. Able to listen compassionately, and can effectively guide subjective examinations
 - f. Works effectively with challenging patients
 - g. Responds effectively to unexpected experiences
3. Communication skills
 - a. Uses correct grammar, spelling, and expression; writes legibly
 - b. Recognizes impact of non-verbal communication and modifies accordingly
 - c. Actively listens and maintains eye contact
 - d. Restates, reflects, and clarifies message when appropriate
 - e. Adapts communication to different learning styles and listener backgrounds
 - f. Presents verbal and written messages with logical organization and sequencing
 - g. Maintains open and constructive communication
4. Effective use of time and resources
 - a. Uses unscheduled time effectively
 - b. Completes documentation and assignments in a timely fashion
 - c. Sets up own schedule, and coordinates schedule with others
 - d. Plans ahead, and demonstrates flexibility to unforeseen circumstances
 - e. Sets priorities and reorganizes when needed
 - f. Considers patient's goals in the context of the patient, clinic, and third-party resources
 - g. Performs multiple tasks simultaneously and delegates when appropriate

5. Use of Constructive Feedback
 - a. Demonstrates active listening skills
 - b. Actively seeks feedback from mentors, colleagues, and clients
 - c. Demonstrates a positive attitude toward feedback, without defensiveness
 - d. Assesses and critiques own performance accurately
 - e. Develops a plan of action in response to feedback
 - f. Modifies feedback given to patients and clients according to their learning styles
 - g. Considers multiple approaches when responding to feedback
6. Problem Solving
 - a. Identifies problems, and articulates them clearly
 - b. Describes known solutions to problems
 - c. Examines multiple solutions to problems, justifies solutions selected
7. Professionalism
 - a. Abides by the APTA code of ethics and state licensure regulations; seeks council regarding reporting violations of ethics or laws governing PT practice
 - b. Abides by University and facility policies and procedures
 - c. Demonstrates dependability and punctuality, completes assignments without prompting
 - d. Observes health and safety regulations, identifies risk management situations
 - e. Conducts personal behavior in the school and clinical environment with respect to others including sufficient regulation of emotions and behavior to maintain a safe and professional environment.
8. Responsibility
 - a. Accepts responsibility for actions and outcomes
 - b. Encourages patient and client accountability
 - c. Treats patients within scope of expertise, demonstrates awareness for precautions and contraindications of patient care
9. Critical Thinking
 - a. Prioritizes problems, identifies contributors to problems in the form of a relationship statement
 - b. Formulates solution to problems based on alternative hypotheses
 - c. Considers consequences of possible solutions
 - d. Accepts responsibility and implements solutions
 - e. Evaluates outcomes, reassesses hypotheses and subsequent solutions as needed
10. Stress Management
 - a. Recognizes own stressors or problems, establishes outlets to cope with stressors

- b. Recognizes distress or problems in others
- c. Seeks assistance as needed for self or others
- d. Always maintains professional demeanor in the clinic and classroom
- e. Prioritizes multiple commitments
- f. Responds calmly to urgent situations
- g. Tolerates inconsistencies in the health care environment

B. *Appropriate Professional Performance*

1. Appropriate professional performance is expected in the classroom, the laboratory, and the clinic. Classroom professional behaviors include: demonstrating respect by refraining from side conversations, being well-prepared for lecture and labs; on time arrival, being seated and ready to proceed when class is scheduled to commence; remaining until class is dismissed; observing classroom rules
2. Clinical professional performance includes appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication with classmates, faculty, staff, clinical instructors, patients, families, and other health care workers; demonstrating appropriate use of feedback, assuming responsibility for actions and outcomes, assuming responsibility for learning, punctuality, and professional appearance.
3. Specific facets of a student's professional performance will be assessed during practical examinations, laboratory experiences, clinical education experiences and assignments, etc.

Note: Self-assessment is important in your development as a student and professional physical therapist. Reflecting on past experiences is an extremely valuable method of assessing your performance and planning more useful strategies for the future. Each student is expected to seek feedback from fellow students and faculty as well.

Section 6 CONSEQUENCES OF UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE

The consequences of unacceptable academic, clinical or professional performance are the student being placed on Academic, Clinical or Professional Warning; Academic, Clinical or Professional Probation; or dismissal from the program. These academic states can be changed in the middle of a semester if circumstances warrant it, using the criteria and procedures detailed in this Handbook. The criteria for each, and their consequences, are detailed below. Note that a student can be placed on Probation without having been on Warning, and that a student may be Dismissed from the program without having been on Warning or Probation if circumstances warrant it.

I. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Faculty members are here to assist students in the successful mastery of course material. If midterm grades indicate marginal (C or below) academic achievement, the student is strongly encouraged to seek help immediately from the Course Director, Residential or Hybrid Lead (for students in each respective pathway) and/or their Faculty Mentor. The earlier a problem is identified, and a course of action implemented/completed (such as office hour attendance, faculty mentoring, and/or tutoring), the greater the opportunity for avoiding placement on Academic Warning or Probation.

A. Academic Warning

1. Definition: A formal notice indicating unacceptable academic achievement.
2. The purpose of Academic Warning is to inform the student of their academic performance, to encourage the student to improve their standing, and to avoid the serious consequences of Academic Probation and/or dismissal. Academic Warning will be given for a period of a single academic term but can be instituted in the middle of a semester when circumstances warrant it. In this instance, the period of academic warning will encompass the rest of the semester and continue through the following full academic term.
3. A student will be placed on Academic Warning if:
 - a. The cumulative GPA falls below a 2.75.
 - b. A grade of C is earned in any course.
 - c. A record of poor performance on two practical exams in one course, or one practical exam in each of two courses in the same semester. Poor performance is defined as failure on a practical exam that requires remediation and a re-take.
 - d. In the judgment of the DPT Program Director academic warning is warranted by other academic factors, including midterm performance results.
 - e. Academic Warning can be instituted in the middle of a semester when circumstances warrant it.

4. A student placed on Academic Warning will receive a letter from the DPT Program Director, which will:
 - a. state the reasons for being placed on Academic Warning status
 - b. state the requirements necessary to be removed from Academic Warning status
 - c. list resources available to the student which can assist them in improving their academic performance. Examples of available resources include those found at [the Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity](#).
 - d. state the consequences of not resolving the Academic Warning status, including that the student will be placed on Academic Probation if the conditions warranting the warning are not resolved by the end of the next academic term.
5. Academic Warning status terminates if, at the completion of the subsequent academic term, all requirements (as stated in A-4 above) have been met. If Academic Warning status was applied mid-semester, it terminates at the end of that semester if all requirements (as stated in A-3 above) have been met. If a student enters the third year on Academic Warning, their status will not be upgraded until they complete academic coursework to justify an upgraded status.
6. If a student does not resolve the academic performance issues that resulted in them being placed on Academic Warning after the next academic term, the student's case will be reviewed by the DPT Program Director. Possible actions include but are not limited to:
 - Being placed on Academic Probation
 - Being placed on an alternative class schedule
 - Not being allowed to participate in clinical education experiences

B. Academic Probation

1. Definition: A formal notice indicating continued unacceptable academic achievement. During this period of time (typically one academic term) the faculty will conduct a critical examination and evaluation of the student's academic performance to ascertain academic fitness for continuation in the program.
2. The purpose of Academic Probation is to inform the student that their academic performance jeopardizes their ability to continue in the program, to encourage them to improve their performance, to identify resources available to assist them, and to identify the consequences of continued poor academic performance.
3. A student may be placed on Academic Probation without having been on Academic Warning. A student will be placed on Academic Probation if:

- a. Academic Warning status is not resolved in one academic term.
 - b. The cumulative GPA is 2.50 or less after any academic term.
 - c. A grade of C– or below is earned in any course. Note: that a C– is a failing grade in the Graduate School as well as the Division.
 - d. A record of poor performance on practical exams in two courses across two academic terms. Poor performance is defined as failure on a practical exam that requires a remediation and a re-take.
 - e. In the judgment of the DPT Program Director Academic Probation status is warranted by other academic factors, including midterm performance results.
 - f. Academic Probation can be instituted in the middle of a semester when circumstances warrant it.
4. A student placed on Academic Probation status will receive a letter from the DPT Program Director that will:
- a. state the reasons for being placed on Academic Probation status
 - b. provide the requirements necessary to be removed from Academic Probation status.
 - c. list resources available to the student which can assist them in improving their academic performance. Examples of available resources include those found at [the Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity](#)
 - d. state the consequences if the conditions warranting the probation are not resolved by the end of the next academic term.
5. Academic Probation status terminates if, at the completion of the subsequent academic term, all requirements (as stated in B-3 above) have been resolved. If Academic Probation status was applied mid-semester, it terminates at the end of that semester if all requirements (as stated in B-3 above) have been met. The student will be placed on Academic Warning at that time and will abide by the conditions set forth therein. If a student enters the third year on Academic Probation, their status will not be upgraded until they complete academic coursework to justify an upgraded status.
6. If a student does not resolve the academic performance issues that resulted in him/her being placed on Academic Probation after the next academic term, the student's case will be reviewed by the DPT Program Director. Possible actions include:
- a. Dismissal from the program.
 - b. The DPT Program Director may determine that the student has experienced extenuating circumstances leading to the inability of the student to achieve a GPA greater than 2.75. In that case, an alternative class schedule will be strongly recommended to the student. If the student is still unable to raise their cumulative GPA over 2.75 after the following term, the student may be considered for dismissal.

II. CLINICAL PERFORMANCE

Faculty are dedicated to the students' successful completion of their clinical education experiences. A student who is struggling during a clinical education experience is encouraged to work with their clinical instructor, the clinical education faculty, Division faculty with content expertise, and their faculty mentors to identify and address the issues. The earlier a problem is identified, and a course of action implemented/completed (such as faculty mentoring or tutoring), the greater the opportunity for success. The goal is for the student to avoid being placed on Clinical Warning or Clinical Probation. Note that a student can be placed on Probation without having been on Warning, and that a student may be Dismissed from the program without having been on Warning or Probation if circumstances warrant it.

A. *Clinical Warning*

1. Definition: A formal notice indicating deficiencies or poor performance in the clinical setting.
2. The purposes of this warning are to:
 - a. identify the deficiency,
 - b. inform the student that lack of resolution of the deficiency is unacceptable,
 - c. inform the student of the consequences should the issue persist,
 - d. encourage the student to address and improve the deficiency,
 - e. provide the requirements necessary to be removed from clinical warning status, and
 - f. identify the resources available to the student to improve their performance.
3. Duration: Clinical Warning status will be given for a period extends through the current and next scheduled long term (6-, 8-, 13-, or 16-week) clinical education experience.
4. Clinical Warning status will be given if:
 - a. Clinical performance fails to meet minimal acceptable standards.
 - b. The student receives credit for the clinical education experience but exhibits performance that is below expectations.
5. Deficiencies may be determined by the Director of Clinical Education, Assistant Director of Clinical Education, Site Coordinator of Clinical Education, clinical instructor or other clinical site faculty, or Program Director.
6. Consequences of Clinical Warning
 - a. A student placed on Clinical Warning status will receive a letter from the Director of Clinical Education to that effect and their faculty mentor will also be notified. The letter will:

- i. state the reasons for being placed on Clinical Warning status
 - ii. state the requirements necessary to be removed from Clinical Warning status
 - iii. list resources available to the student which can assist them in improving their clinical performance
 - iv. state the consequences of not resolving the Clinical Warning status, including that the student will be placed on Clinical Probation if the conditions warranting the warning are not resolved
 - b. A remediation program (e.g. mentoring/tutorial assistance, additional clinical education experiences) will be identified and the student will be required to follow it.
 - c. A student on Clinical Warning status will be assigned to their next clinical rotation at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education in consultation with the DPT Program Director and appropriate faculty.
7. Termination: Clinical Warning status terminates if, at the completion of the specific time frame, all requirements necessary to be removed from Clinical Warning status are met.
8. Failure to resolve a Clinical Warning status will result in the student being placed on Clinical Probation.

B. Clinical Probation

1. Definition: A formal notice indicating continued deficiencies or poor performance in the clinical setting.
 - a. "continued deficiencies" means the student fails to meet minimal acceptable standards or performs below expectations during the two clinical education experiences.
2. During the Clinical Probation period the Director of Clinical Education and Program Director will conduct a critical examination and evaluation of the student's performance to ascertain their fitness for continuation in the program.
3. A student may be placed on Clinical Probation without having been on Clinical Warning. A student will be placed on Clinical Probation if:
 - a. The program or the clinical site faculty identify that the student's professional or clinical performance fails to meet the prescribed minimal acceptable standards.
 - b. The student's poor performance continues over two clinical education experiences.
 - c. The student fails to rectify a Clinical Warning status in the subsequent clinical rotation.
4. Consequences of Clinical Probation status

- a. A student placed on Clinical Probation status will receive a letter to that effect and their faculty mentor will also be notified.
 - b. A remediation program (e.g. mentoring/tutorial assistance, additional clinical education experiences) will be identified and the student will be required to follow it.
 - c. A student on Clinical Probation status will be assigned to their next clinical rotation at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education in consultation with the Program Director and appropriate faculty.
5. Termination: Clinical Probation status terminates if, at the completion of the specified Clinical Probation time frame, all requirements necessary to be removed from Clinical Probation status are met. At that point the student will be placed on Clinical Warning status and will abide by the conditions set therein.
6. Failure to resolve a Clinical Probation status will result in the student being referred to the Program Director and being considered for dismissal.
7. Clinical Probationary status will not be recorded on the student's permanent academic record. However, should Clinical Probation lead to dismissal, the basis for dismissal will be noted on the permanent academic record.

III. PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE

Students engaged in training to enter a professional field must display attitudes and behaviors consistent with the expectations of that profession. These attributes are detailed in Section 5.IV of this Handbook.

Unacceptable professional behaviors may include but are not limited to any (one or more) of the following areas:

- Conduct that involves discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, based on a protected characteristic or related retaliation. Further examples are described under the [USC Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) ([USC Student Handbook](#))
- Disorderly conduct is prohibited and is defined as one or more of the following:
 - Any unreasonable or reckless conduct by a student or student organization that is inherently or potentially unsafe to other persons or their real or personal property.
 - Any behavior by a student or student organization that disrupts the peace or interferes with the normal operation of the university or university sponsored activities including but not limited to study, teaching, research, officially invited speakers, university administration, public safety, or fire, police or emergency services, or other authorized activity. ([USC Student Handbook](#))
- Use (unless prescribed by a licensed physician) or distribution of contraband substances (narcotic or mood-altering drugs). Per the [USC Student Handbook](#):

“use, possession, or dissemination of unauthorized or illegal drugs, or drug-related paraphernalia, is against university policy. USC is a smoke-free campus, which includes the prohibition of tobacco possession or use on campus property. Although California law permits adults aged 21 or older to possess and consume cannabis under certain circumstances, federal law still prohibits the possession, use, or distribution of cannabis, including for medical purposes. Thus, use or possession of cannabis, including CBD and cannabis concentrates, is not permitted on university property. Exceptions are limited to: FDA-approved drugs (Epidiolex, Marinol, Syndros and Cesamet); hulled hemp seed, hemp seed protein powder, and hemp seed oil; and cosmetics containing cannabis or cannabis derived ingredients. (See Appendix III: Information and Resources Concerning Substance Use for additional information.)”

- Disruptive behavior on campus or in the clinic as defined by the [USC Student Handbook](#) and in this document.
- Inappropriate conduct and behaviors with peers/patients/staff/faculty
- Failure to adhere to professional behaviors consistent with policies and procedures outlined in Section 3 of this document regarding the Division Anatomy Laboratory.
- Dishonesty or otherwise failure to abide by University, Division, and/or Course academic integrity standards. Including items listed in the [USC Student Handbook](#).
- Failure to adhere to ethical standards for research patients, patient care, or classroom conduct
- Excessive absences that are either unreported (regardless of whether the reason for absence qualifies as excused or unexcused) or unexcused. (See Section 1.III)
- Excessive class tardiness (See Section 1.III)
- Failure to adhere to exam proctoring policies and procedures. (See Section 4.IV)

Performance inconsistent with these expectations will result in the student being placed on Professionalism Warning or Probation status. The purpose of this is to ensure the student is aware of their deficiencies and is provided with the resources to address them. The earlier a problem is identified, and a course of action implemented the greater the opportunity for successful resolution. The expectation is for the student to avoid being placed on Professionalism Warning or Probation. Note however that if circumstances warrant it a student can be placed on Probation without having been on Warning, and that a student may be Dismissed from the program without having been on Warning or Probation.

A. Professionalism Warning

1. Definition: A formal notice indicating unacceptable professional performance.
2. The purpose of Professionalism Warning is to inform the student of the deficiencies in their professional performance, to encourage the student to improve their performance, and to detail the serious consequences of failing to improve.

3. Duration: Professionalism Warning will be given for a period of a single academic term but can be instituted in the middle of a semester when professionalism problems warrant it. In this instance, the period of Professionalism Warning will encompass the rest of the semester and continue through the following full academic term.
4. A student will be placed on Professionalism Warning status for:
 - a. single egregious or multiple/continued episodes of behavior inconsistent with the expectations for professionalism detailed in Section 5.IV of this DPT Handbook.
 - b. In the judgment of the DPT Program Director, in consultation with faculty and the DPT Program Directors' Council, Professionalism Warning status is warranted.
5. A student placed on Professionalism Warning status will be provided verbal feedback regarding the inappropriate professional performance and the relevant expectations of the faculty. In addition, they will receive a letter from the DPT Program Director, which will:
 - a. state the reasons for being placed on Professionalism Warning status
 - b. state the requirements necessary to be removed from Professionalism Warning status
 - c. list resources available to the student which can assist them in improving their professional performance, including but not limited to evaluation at the [Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity](#), evaluation and counseling through the student health center, or referral to other outside resources as necessary.
 - d. state the consequences of not resolving the Professionalism Warning status, including that the student will be placed on Professionalism Probation if the conditions warranting the Warning are not resolved by the end of the next academic term.
6. Consequences of unresolved performance: If a change to more appropriate professional performance does not occur,
 - a. a meeting will be scheduled with the DPT Program Director (and/or other appropriate faculty as necessary) and the student. The student's faculty mentor may attend this meeting if the student requests their attendance. At this meeting, the problem(s) will be identified, and a recommended course of action will be determined.
 - b. The student will be placed on Professionalism Probation and will be subject to appropriate consequences as determined by the DPT Program Director and/or appropriate faculty. Recommendations may include evaluation at the [Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity](#), evaluation and counseling through the student health center, or referral to other outside resources as necessary. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem through these means.

B. *Professionalism Probation*

1. Definition: A formal notice indicating continued and ongoing unacceptable professional performance or sufficiently egregious behavior to put the student at risk for dismissal.
2. The purpose of Professionalism Probation is to inform the student of the deficiencies in their professional performance, to encourage the student to improve their performance, and to detail the serious consequences of failing to improve.
3. Duration: Professionalism Probation will be given for a period of a single academic term but can be instituted in the middle of a semester when professionalism problems warrant it. In this instance, the period of Professionalism Probation will encompass the rest of the semester and continue through the following full academic term.
4. A student may be placed on Professionalism Probation without having been on Professionalism Warning. A student will be placed on Professionalism Probation status for:
 - a. Multiple/continued episodes of behavior inconsistent with the expectations for professionalism detailed in Section 5.IV of this DPT Handbook.
 - b. A single egregious episode of behavior inconsistent with the expectations for professionalism detailed in Section 5.IV of this DPT Handbook. Single egregious behaviors warranting Professionalism Probation include clear violation of zero tolerance policies.
 - c. Behaviors for which in the judgment of the DPT Program Director, in consultation with faculty and/or members of the DPT Program Directors' Council, Professionalism Probation status is warranted.
5. Consequences of Professionalism Probation
 - a. A student placed on Professionalism Probation status will provided verbal feedback regarding the inappropriate professional performance and the relevant expectations of the faculty. In addition, they will receive a letter from the DPT Program Director, which will:
 - i. state the reasons for being placed on Professionalism Probation status
 - ii. state the requirements necessary to be removed from Professionalism Probation status
 - iii. list resources available to the student which can assist them in improving their professional performance

- iv. state the consequences of not resolving the Professionalism Probation status, including that the student could be considered for dismissal.
- 6. Consequences of unresolved performance: If a change to more appropriate professional performance does not occur,
 - a. a meeting will be scheduled with the DPT Program Director (and/or other appropriate faculty as necessary) and the student. The student's faculty mentor may attend this meeting if the student requests their attendance. At this meeting, the problem(s) will be identified, and a recommended course of action will be determined.
 - b. Failure to demonstrate a change may result in dismissal from the program.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF UNRESOLVED WARNING OR PROBATION

If, despite all the aforementioned efforts, the problem remains unresolved, disciplinary action could include Interim Suspension or Dismissal.

A. Interim Suspension

Interim Suspension is an exclusion from classes or other specified activities of the Division for a specified period of time.

A student will be considered for interim suspension:

1. If, in the judgment of the faculty, a professional performance problem requires medical evaluation.
2. If there is evidence that the continued presence of the student poses a substantial threat to themselves or to others or to the stability and continuance of normal Divisional functions.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING PATHWAY AVAILABILITY

Students admitted to the hybrid pathway should take care to review the special note addressed in item XIV, Section F of this handbook.

B. Dismissal

Termination of the student's right to enroll or participate in the classes, seminars or programs of the Division.

If a student meets any of the following conditions, they will be referred to the DPT Program Director of for consideration for dismissal:

1. The student does not achieve a minimum of 2.5 GPA at the end of the first academic term.
2. Students entering the program on conditional admission who do not achieve a 2.75 GPA at the end of the first academic term.
3. Failure to meet the minimum 2.75 cumulative GPA
4. At the completion of any academic term, a second academic probation is warranted.
5. The student fails one course.
6. While on academic warning or probation, a failing grade is not reconciled within the period specified by the Course Director.
7. A record of poor performance on 2 practical exams in one course or 3 practical exams within the 3-year program. Poor performance is defined as failure on a practical exam that requires a remediation and a re-take.
8. Clinical performance that fails to meet minimal expectations at the end of two clinical education experiences.
9. Based on the student's remaining program requirements, the student cannot complete the program within the maximum allowable timeframe of 4.5 years, including any approved leave(s) of absence and flex schedule accommodations.
10. A deficiency in any area, including the affective domain, that is determined to be beyond remediation.
11. After counseling and reasonable intervention, the student is deemed by the faculty to be unsuited for the practice of Physical Therapy.
12. The student is prosecuted for or found guilty of unlawful acts.

V. APPEALS PROCESS

A. *Questioning of Status*

A student who believes that placement in any deficient academic, clinical or professionalism status was based on incomplete or inaccurate information should appeal to the DPT Program Director. If the student's claim is verified, the DPT Program Director will initiate action to correct the situation and will advise the faculty of any action.

Failure to resolve the problem(s) resulting in disruption of academic/clinical performance could lead to student to disciplinary actions.

B. *Appeal of Disciplinary Action*

1. A student may appeal a disciplinary action if one of the following conditions exist (Refer to the [USC Student Handbook](#)):
 - a. That new evidence has become available that is sufficient to alter the decision and which the appellant was not aware of at the time of the original hearing.
 - b. That the sanction imposed is excessive or inappropriate.

- c. That the Division failed to follow University rules or regulations while reviewing the cited behavior.

2. Process of Appeal

- a. A student may appeal any disciplinary action with a written letter of intent to appeal to the Chair of the Division.
 - i. The written letter of intent to appeal must be made within 21 days of the decision.
- b. The Chair may request review of the appeal by an *ad hoc* Student Performance Committee (SPC) for deliberation.
 - i. See page 6-7 for a description of the SPC. Members of the committee will not have had direct interaction with the matter at hand.
 - ii. The student will have the opportunity to present their case to the SPC. Students must author any written submissions and speak on their own behalf during any meetings. If they wish to be accompanied by an adviser or wish for the university to share information with their adviser, the adviser must sign a confidentiality agreement and agree to let the student present their testimony.
 - iii. The SPC will make a recommendation to the Chair
 - iv. The Chair will make the final decision.
 - v. The student will be informed of the Chair's decision.
 - 1. The Chair may stipulate requirements for return including passing a comprehensive re-entry exam; GPA requirements; academic, professional, and clinic performance requirements for return and continuation in the program.
- c. Further Appeals
 - i. Should the student wish to appeal the Division Chair's decision, the next level of appeal to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the School of Dentistry.
 - ii. Each appeal must be made in writing within 21 days of the decision being appealed.
 - iii. A response will be provided within 30 days.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING PATHWAY AVAILABILITY

Students admitted to the hybrid pathway should take care to review the special note addressed in item XIV, Section D of this handbook.

VI. READMISSION FOLLOWING DISMISSAL

The procedures for establishing programs for readmitted students have been purposefully left flexible in order to better respond to the needs of individual students.

A. Options for Readmission

The DPT Program Director and the DPT Program Directors' Council will consider readmission applications.

B. Procedures for Applying for Readmission:

1. A person applying for readmission must submit a petition in writing to the DPT Program Director for referral to the DPT Program Directors' Council no later than four months (120 days) prior to the date of proposed or desired readmission. This petition should clearly state the reasons why readmission should be granted.
2. Upon acceptance of a readmission petition, the DPT Program Director & DPT Program Directors' Council will:
 - a. Determine the readmission level.
 - b. Request appropriate faculty to develop a precise academic program.
 - c. Maintain the readmitted student on the academic status in existence at the end of the last completed academic term.
3. All grades received by the readmitted student remain on the official transcript.
 - a. Graduate school policy requires that failing grades be computed in the student's overall GPA.
 - b. Graduate school policy requires that all students successfully completing the program have a minimum 2.75 GPA.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING PATHWAY AVAILABILITY

Students admitted to the hybrid pathway should take care to review the special note addressed in item XIV, Section D of this handbook.

APPENDIX



PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITIONS SUMMARY FORM

Date: _____

Physician Name: _____

Student Name: _____ **ID#:** _____

**Division of
Biokinesiology &
Physical Therapy
at the
School of Dentistry**

Attached is a copy of the Physical Health Conditions Summary Form for the University of Southern California, Doctor of Physical Therapy Program. You are currently treating one of our students. Please fill out the attached form to notify us of any physical limitations this student may have in participating in their education.

Please keep in mind the Physical Therapy curriculum includes clinical laboratory courses as well as performing in a clinical setting in direct patient care. Physical Therapy is a physically demanding occupation and the physical requirements may include, but are not limited to, squatting, bending, lifting, moving patient limbs, etc.

Your participation in this process ensures the student will be able to optimize his or her health while allowing the student to continue their education. If you have any questions about this form or need any further information, please contact our Student Services Administrator at (323) 442-2670.

Sincerely,

USC Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy Program
1540 East Alcazar
Los Angeles, CA 90033
(323) 442-2900

University of Southern
California
1540 East Alcazar Street
CHP 155
Los Angeles,
California 90089-9006
Tel: 323 442 2900
Fax: 323 442 1515
www.usc.edu/pt

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy 1540 East Alcazar, Los Angeles, CA 90033

Physical Health Conditions Summary Form

CONFIDENTIAL – TO BE SIGNED BY CARE PROVIDER

Recommendations for Return to Class and Clinic Participation

Student's Name: _____ (Last, First, MI)

USC ID#: _____

I authorize the release of the information below to the Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy Program.

As a student in the USC DPT Program, it is my duty to inform the Course Coordinators and Director of Clinical Education about issues that may limit my class or clinic participation. I understand that the recommendations/precautions in this form are the professional opinion of my provider and do not represent physician clearance. I release the University of Southern California, its employees, offices, & agents, from any and all liability, claims, or actions of any kind that may arise by or in connection with my participation.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

To be completed by the health care provider: Please print clearly.

Care Provider Name: _____

Address: ☐ USC PT Associates
1640 Marengo Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033

Phone Number: ☐ (323) 224-7070

☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____

1. Diagnosis: _____

2. Date of first consultation for this injury/illness: _____

3. When did this injury/illness first arise/occur? _____

4. Is the patient limited in their ability to attend class (sit for >1 hour), participate in lab/perform patient care (stand, squat, bend, lift), and study?

No restrictions ☐

Yes, has restrictions ☐

If YES, expected return date: _____

COMPLETE REVERSE (Page 2 of 2)

5. If you answered YES on #4, please **check** below if this patient has any of the following restrictions and list modifications (if applicable). If yes, indicate expected duration.

	NO Restriction	YES Restriction	Modifications/Duration
Bending:	☐	☐	_____
Squatting:	☐	☐	_____
Pivoting:	☐	☐	_____
Kneeling:	☐	☐	_____
Overhead reaching:	☐	☐	_____
Writing:	☐	☐	_____
Sitting:	☐	☐	<15 min ☐ <30 min ☐ <60 min ☐
Lifting:	☐	☐	<5lbs ☐ <10 lbs ☐ <25 lbs ☐
Other:	☐	☐	_____

6. Is there any further information or are there extenuating circumstances you feel may be relevant in this patient's case?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes: _____

Signature of Provider: _____ Date: _____

License Number: _____

STUDENT INJURY REPORT

Complete this form whether or not the injured person receives medical care or the injury seems trivial. Submit to your Program Director.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name _____ Student ID# _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone Number (____) _____ - _____

LOCATION OF INCIDENT

Bldg/Room/Class _____ Address _____
Date of accident/illness _____ Time/Hour: _____ AM /PM
Date Reported to Faculty Member _____ Time/Hour: _____ AM/PM

STUDENT'S DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

Describe what you were doing just before the incident occurred (include activity and any tools, equipment, material used; e.g. "using knife to cut lettuce for salad") _____

Describe how accident occurred (e.g. knife slipped and cut finger") _____

Type of injury and part of body affected (e.g. "laceration to left index finger") _____

List object, tool or substance that was most clearly connected with the accident/illness (e.g. knife, stairs, and floor) _____

Names and addresses of any witnesses, or other persons associated with the incident.

FACULTY REVIEW OF INCIDENT

How did you become aware of the incident (witnessed the incident, reported by the student, other)?

To the best of your knowledge, describe the incident (what happened).

Preventive recommendations and corrective actions

TREATMENT INFORMATION

Treatment given at: Site ☐ Student Health Center ☐ Internal Medicine (HCC II) ☐ ER ☐ Hospitalization ☐
If treated by Physician for this injury please list name and address

Address of off campus care provider

Faculty Member's name (PRINT) _____ Ext. _____ Date _____
Program Director's Signature _____ Date _____